

THE DICKENSIAN



EDITED BY LESLIE G. STAPLES

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CONTENTS

	PAGE
WHEN FOUND—The Editor	115
DICKENS AND THE 1851 EXHIBITION—T. W. Hill	119
BIRTHDAY TRIBUTES—L. A. G. Strong and Dilys Powell	125
<i>Edwin Drood</i> ON THE STAGE—Angela Thirkell	130
FIRST AID FOR THE "DROOD" AUDIENCE—Felix Aylmer	133
"WOMEN IN THE HOME"—K. J. Fielding	140
WHERE CRUMMLES PLAYED—James G. Ollé	143
IF IT HAPPENED OTHERWISE—J. H. McNulty	148
NEW DROODIANA—John Tomlinson	152
THE DICKENS HOUSE ENDOWMENT FUND	153
NOTES ON <i>Sketches by Boz</i> —T. W. Hill	154
CURTAIN UP ON <i>A Christmas Carol</i> —Malcolm Morley	159
RECENT DICKENSIANA	164
THE DICKENS FELLOWSHIP	165

WALTER T. SPENCER

(M. E. SPENCER)

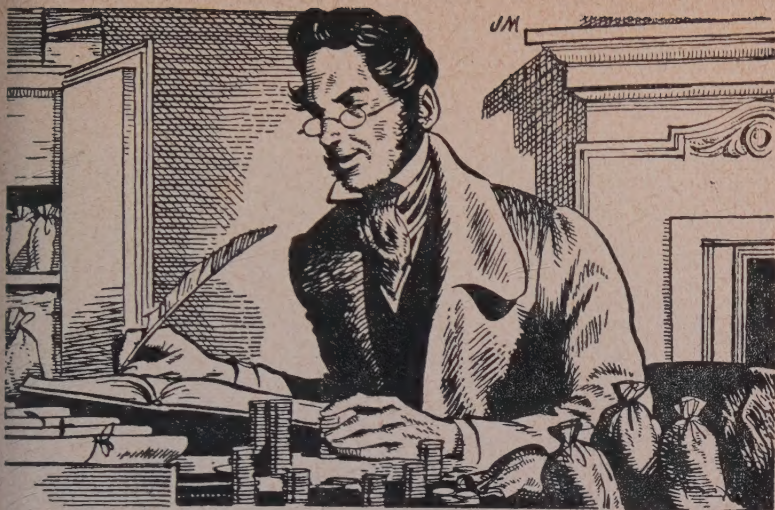
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THE LONDON BANKER

The squeaking of a quill pen . . . spluttering radiance of the newly-invented gas-light . . . the soft, heavy clink of gold coinage . . . from outside, the clatter of hooves on a cobbled street . . . *an office of the London and Westminster Bank in the 1830's.*

THE TEMPO of business was slower, in an age which knew neither telephones nor typewriters—when the invitation to enjoy the ‘hospitality of the Manager’ was the normal conclusion to a successful transaction. These early days in the Bank’s history now seem incredibly remote. Yet throughout the intervening years, which brought greater changes than did those of any previous century, the policy of the Westminster Bank has marched with the times; it aims to provide a complete banking service, based on the highest traditions of integrity and fair dealing.

WESTMINSTER BANK LIMITED



Emlyn Williams as Charles Dickens
reading from *Bleak House*.

Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, February 4th, 1951
(see opposite)

By courtesy of Angus McBean.

THE DICKENSIAN

SUMMER NUMBER

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WHEN FOUND—

Mr. Emlyn Williams.

Among the most successful contemporary dramatists is Mr. Emlyn Williams who has had a round dozen of plays produced in London during the past few years.

Earlier this year his *Accolade* concluded a six months successful run at the Aldwych Theatre, having had, in common with most of his plays, the advantage of having its leading character played by the author with all his accustomed distinction. The play betrayed its author's keen interest in Dickens and the principal character has a small son absorbed in that author, as indeed is Mr. Williams's own son. The theme of the play is the effect upon an author's career of the revelation of an unorthodox private life, and one comes to the conclusion that it was suggested to Mr. Williams by theories about Dickens's own private life which have figured in recent biographies.

* * * * *

A "Reading."

A year or so ago Mr. Emlyn Williams and his son were interested visitors to the Dickens House. Towards the end of the run of *Accolade* he came again, this time with the interesting news that at the forthcoming special performance, organised by the Merely Players Society in aid of theatrical charities, he intended to give a "Reading" from *Bleak House* in the character of Dickens himself and intimated that he would like to borrow Dickens's original Reading Desk for the purpose. Special permission was sought from and gladly given by the Trustees, and at Drury Lane Theatre, on February 4th, the famous desk was installed on a plinth before a curtain setting on that celebrated stage. Then: enter Emlyn Williams as Charles Dickens—a brilliant character assumption. The all too short passage selected was the murder of Mr. Tulkinghorn, so perfectly done that more than one spectator was electrified. At the close of the Reading the house rose at the actor. It was a performance that cries out to be seen again. We are grateful for permission to reproduce as our frontispiece a photograph of Mr. Williams at the desk, photographed at Doughty Street by Mr. Angus McBean.

* * * * *

Shaw and Dickens.

We have received a number of protests from Dickensians who are also admirers of the work of Bernard Shaw, about a passage in the book which Miss Blanche Patch has recently published about her thirty years as the great man's secretary: "Like boxing, Charles Dickens was another of those unexpected subjects for which Shaw's enthusiasm is accepted by the Shavians with an air of apology." If it is true that any appreciable number of Shavians feel such an "air of apology" necessary, which we beg leave to doubt, they can quickly be convinced of the wisdom and justice of their author's admiration for Dickens if they take no more trouble than consult the famous Prefaces. Miss Patch adds the interesting information that "Shaw had himself met Dickens" who "had shown him a different ending to *Great Expectations*." G.B.S. had reached the mature age of five years when that book was written and was only thirteen when Dickens paid his last visit to Ireland. In the same illuminating paragraph Miss Patch quotes Shaw as writing

that Dickens "made a mess of both" the original and substituted endings of *Great Expectations*. We should like to know where this criticism may be found. It is not in his preface to the American edition of the novel, to which Miss Patch is presumably referring

* * * * *

The Birthday in Southwark. A very cold and wet evening no doubt accounted for a small representation of the Fellowship at the Annual

Dickens Birthday Service at Southwark Cathedral, on Sunday, 4th February. The members who did brave the elements were treated to the usual thoughtful address we have come to expect from the Rev. George Parkinson who had come over from Guernsey for the service at the invitation of the Provost. Taking as his text "I sat where they sat," Ezekiel Ch. III v. 15, Mr. Parkinson said that Dickens wrote of the poor as he did because he himself had lived as one of them, was familiar with their trials, and sympathised with their difficulties. Following the service many members were received at the Church House by the Provost, to whom thanks were offered by the Chairman of Committee, Mr. J. W. Kimber, for the organisation of this annual commemoration which affords so much pleasure to Dickens lovers, especially to members of the Fellowship.

* * * * *

London Landmarks. After a melancholy threat of demolition, a reprieve has been granted to the George and Vulture tavern in the City of London. The news has caused great delight

not only to the members of the City Pickwick Club, who have dined there for many years, but to countless pilgrims who visit the house at which Mr. Pickwick intimated that he "was suspended." Further satisfaction has been caused by the practical certainty that Temple Bar will be restored to London in the not too distant future. It is expected to be re-erected at the Embankment Gate to the Temple.

* * * * *

Pickwick by amateurs. The Comedy Club, the flourishing seventy-year-old amateur dramatic society, staged its first Dickens production at the Cripplegate Theatre, London, in

February, when it presented two performances of Cosmo Hamilton and Frank E. Reilly's adaptation of *Pickwick*. This is the version used at the Haymarket Theatre in 1929, when Charles Laughton played the fairy in gaiters. The production was very tastefully staged and the long cast acquitted themselves most creditably in their difficult task.

* * * * *

Edwin Drood again. After a quiescent period of some years it would appear that the problems arising out of Dickens's unfinished masterpiece are now to take on a new lease of life. The

Fellowship's decision to make *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* one of the "Books of the Year" for special study this year was admirably timed, and led to the further decision to stage a new dramatic version to be written and produced by Mrs. Jane Bacon. When asked if he would supply an outline for a conclusion to the play, based upon the theories on which he has worked for so long, Mr. Felix Aylmer, the distinguished actor, not only agreed but generously offered to write the concluding act himself. A review of the performance by Mrs. Angela Thirkell appears on another page, and for the benefit of readers who were unable to attend, Mr. Aylmer has in addition furnished us with a summary of his theories which we are proud to present in this number. Unless we are much mistaken, there now begins a further period of speculation and discussion, for Mr. Aylmer's conclusions are highly original, and to one reader, at least, of the first importance. Another dramatic version has been published recently, as well as a new book on the great mystery, both of which are noticed in this issue.

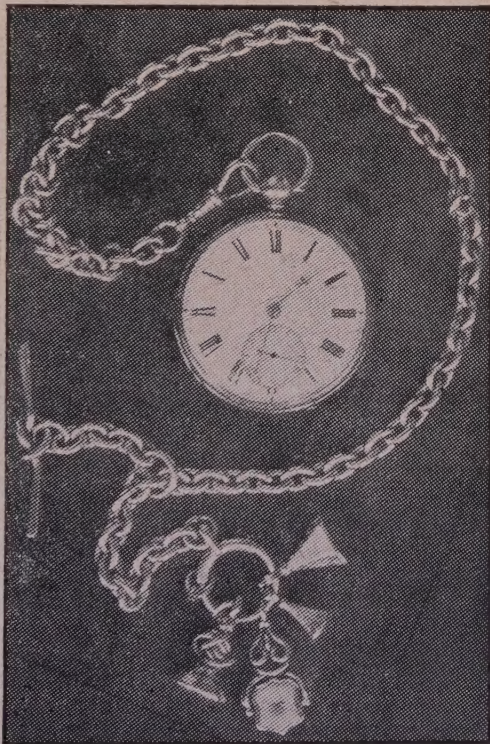
The Festival.

The Festival of Britain is now well under way. In addition to the main exhibition on the South Bank, there are many subsidiary ones worthy of the visitor's attention. Among those which the Dickens Fellowship has aided with loans or assistance are the Book Exhibition at the Victoria and Albert Museum, "The South Bank, Past and Present," at County Hall, and another illustrating the history of St. Martins-in-the-Fields, in the crypt of that church.

* * * * *

Coventry's Watch.

"I give my watch (the gold repeater presented to me at Coventry), and I give the chains and seals and all appendages I have worn with it, to my dear and trusty friend John Forster," wrote Charles Dickens in his will. Forster, in his turn, bequeathed this watch by will to Thomas Carlyle, who inherited it in 1881, and in whose family it has remained ever since. The last news we had of it (*The Dickensian*, 1914, p. 221), reported that it was in Edinburgh, in the possession of Mr. Alexander Carlyle, nephew of the author. We are glad to have assisted the city of Coventry to trace it to its present owner, Miss Elizabeth Carlyle, of Dumfries, who has generously lent it for exhibition in the city which made and presented it to Dickens. It was the work of Rotherham and Son, and is still in excellent order, sounding the hours and quarters. It is technically described as an "open faced, engine-turned, dome-cased movement, three-quarter plate, jewelled in ten holes, gold balance, sunk seconds, enamel dial." The presentation was made at the old Castle Hotel, Coventry, in December, 1858, in recognition of the author's generosity in reading his *Christmas Carol* at the Corn Exchange, for the benefit of the Coventry Institute, a year earlier. The watch bears the following inscription: "Presented to Charles Dickens, Esq., by his friends at Coventry in testimony of his kindness to them and of his eminent services in the interests of humanity."



By courtesy of Mr. E. P. Wright and the Coventry *Evening Telegraph*.

* * * * *

Count de Suzannet.

The reference to the great-grand father of the late Count de Suzannet as copied from a Swiss source in our last number is, we are informed, inaccurate. General Constant de Suzannet took part in the wars of la Vendée from 1793 until his

death on June 20th, 1815. No member of the family took part in the incident of 1832.

* * * * *

The Lighthouse.

The large picture of "Eddystone Lighthouse," painted by Clarkson Stanfield for Dickens's private production of Wilkie Collins's melodrama *The Lighthouse*, to which it served as an act-drop, and which formed part of the collection of the first Lord Moyne on exhibition at Kenwood, with the Iveagh Bequest, has been presented to the Dickens House by the present Lord Moyne and his fellow trustees. After its use at the little theatre in Dickens's drawing-room at Tavistock House, it found a home in the hall at Gad's Hill Place and figured in the sale of the novelist's pictures in 1870. Now it appropriately finds a resting place in Dickens's earlier home at



THE LIGHTHOUSE

The original act-drop by Clarkson Stanfield, R.A.

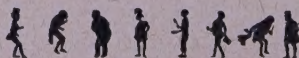
Doughty Street. Dickensians the world over will be grateful to the donors for their generosity.

* * * * *

More Radio Dickens.

We cannot find it in our hearts to go into details about the recent B.B.C. serial broadcast of *The Pickwick Papers*, the general condemnation of which we heartily endorse. The leader on the subject in *The Times* was severe, but deservedly so. However, as we have derived much pleasure from previous serials, we propose to say no more. But we were treated to an abbreviated *David Copperfield* on a few week-nights. This was much better and restored hope for the future. Listeners will remember it for several reasons, not least for the Betsey Trotwood of Gladys Young.

LESLIE C. STAPLES.



DICKENS AND THE 1851 EXHIBITION

BY T. W. HILL

THIS Festival of Britain year, 1951, is also the centenary of the Great Exhibition of the Industries of All Nations in Hyde Park. It may be interesting for Dickensians to study the reactions of Charles Dickens to the festival of a hundred years ago. He was at that time at the zenith of his fame and the height of his power. He had already written his most popular and fruitful novels, although there were still great works to come, and his preoccupation when the Royal Commission for the Great Exhibition was appointed in January, 1850, was the arduous preparations for the launching of his weekly magazine *Household Words*, the first number of which appeared on March 30th. By June the Commissioners had received two hundred and fifty competitive designs for the Exhibition Building, but for various reasons had refused all of them and decided to construct one of their own, a brick-built edifice that would have been very expensive to erect and perhaps still more expensive to demolish and dispose of at the end of the exhibition. Then Paxton submitted one that was finally accepted and work began at once. By the middle of January 1851 the building was nearly complete, and Dickens commissioned Wills, his sub-editor, to write an article for *Household Words* describing the realisation of Paxton's dream. Dickens had the highest opinion of Paxton, whom he had known as one of the original capital proprietors of the *Daily News* in 1846. On three occasions at public dinners he alluded to him in the warmest terms. On April 14th, 1851, for the General Theatrical Fund "like that astonishing evidence of the skill and energy of my friend Mr. Paxton which all the world is now called upon to admire"; on June 8th, 1851, for the Gardeners' Benevolent Institution in proposing Paxton's health he referred to "that wonderful building designed for the Great Exhibition in Hyde Park, that it ought to have fallen down, but that it refused to do so . . . a gentleman had said to him that no doubt Mr. Paxton is a great man but there is one objection to him . . . that is that he is a gardener. Now that is our case tonight, that he is a gardener and we are extremely proud of it. This is a great age . . . when a man by the power of his own genius and good sense can scale such a daring height as Mr. Paxton has reached"; and on December 10th, 1854, for the Commercial Travellers' Schools, when he said facetiously that so many travellers had been going up Mont Blanc that he had heard of a company being formed to employ Sir Joseph Paxton to take it down. It was Paxton who was called in on Dickens's suggestion to design and construct the stage and its fittings for the performance of *Not So Bad As We Seem* at Devonshire House in May, 1851.

Wills's article, "The Private History of the Palace of Glass" appeared in *Household Words* on January 18th, 1851, and may well have been founded partly on material supplied by Dickens, from his personal knowledge of Paxton. It traced the story back to 1837, when the botanical explorer Sir Robert Schomburgk found on the river Berbice in Demerara the gigantic water-lily which he named *Victoria Regia*; it had leaves five or six feet in diameter and blooms fifteen inches across. A specimen was sent to the Duke of Devonshire for whom Paxton, who managed the estates at Chatsworth, designed a special glass-house—the largest in the world—sixty feet long by forty feet wide. Here the *Victoria Regia* was planted in August, 1849, and by November 9th it bloomed and then seeded. Then the article goes on to relate that on the Royal Commission not being able to settle on a design for the Exhibition, Paxton on June 14th discussed the matter with Mr. Ellis, M.P. and on June 18th, 1850, at a meeting of a Committee of the Midland Railway

Company at which he was in the chair Paxton, with his lily-house in his mind "doodled" or scribbled on his blotting paper and whispered to his friend "This is not a note of evidence, but a design for the Great Industrial Building to be erected in Hyde Park." From this rough sketch Paxton prepared elevations, sections and a specification, and on the journey to London he met in the train one of the Royal Commissioners, Mr. Robert Stephenson, who admired the plans, became enthusiastic, and submitted them to a Meeting of the Commissioners at which the Prince Consort was chairman supported by Sir Robert Peel. The Prince liked Paxton's plans but the Building Committee rejected them, so Paxton decided to publish them in the *Illustrated London News* and they met with acclamation from a discerning public. As nothing definite had yet been decided Paxton contrived to send in, at the last minute detailed drawings and estimates for a glass building exactly 1851 feet (corresponding with the figures of the year) long and 450 feet broad, equal to a surface of about eighteen acres. All the measurements of the proposed building were multiples or dividends of 24, for ease of calculation. For instance, the internal columns were 24 feet apart and the external ones were 8 feet apart and all were hollow so that they could act as drains for rain water and for precipitated moisture from the roof; the transepts were 72 feet wide, the side aisles 48 feet, the galleries and corridors 24 feet, as were the rafters of the roof. It was probably one of the earliest instances of a building the materials of which were capable of "mass-production." Anyway the whole scheme was accepted, with a few modifications, as the lowest practical tender. The central transept was raised to 112 feet to accommodate certain of the growing trees in Hyde Park to save them from destruction. Work was begun at once; by August the site was boarded in, and on September 14th the first of the columns arrived. The total amount of ground covered by the Exhibition was twenty-two acres and the building provided nine miles of tabling for exhibits. The article attracted some attention, and in the complete Official Catalogue of the Exhibition, priced at £1, it was reproduced as an appendix.

Dickens from the very first apparently entertained doubts about the purposes and usefulness of the Exhibition, largely devoted as it was to material progress and mechanical appliances, and to a less extent to art, educational matters and spiritual values. Although he was watching the progress being made with the structure, as shewn in Wills's article just quoted, he felt constrained to give publicity to his doubts in the course of an article in *Household Words* for January 4th, 1851. It is a review of the events of 1850 and is entitled "The Last Words of the Old Year," and takes the form of the instructions of the dying year to its successors. The truly Dickensian opening runs: "This venerable gentleman who attained the great age of three hundred and sixty-five (days), breathed his last at midnight on the thirty-first of December," and then come his testamentary instructions; more improvement in social conditions, relief of the poor, better education, better sanitation, reform in the administration of justice particularly as regards its costly processes and the harsh punishment of juvenile offenders, and then proceeds: "I have seen a wonderful structure raised in glass by the energy and skill of a great national genius self-improved . . . Which of my children shall behold a great display of England's sins and negligencies, to be, by steady contemplation of all eyes and steady union of all hearts and hands, set right? Come hither, and study the Humanities through these transparent windows . . . Listen, My Lords and Gentlemen, to the roar within, so deep, so real, so low down, so incessant and accumulative . . . [Nothing] but work in the right spirit will quiet it for a second, or clear an inch of space

in this dark exhibition of the bad results of our doings. When shall we hold it? When shall we open it?"

At the turn of the year 1850 Dickens had conceived his idea for a scheme entailing much travelling, dramatic organisation correspondence and attendance at meetings, for the benefit of authors and artists who, by reason of misfortune or failure, were in need of assistance, and for this purpose founded the Guild of Literature and Art. The worldwide interest in the forthcoming exhibition raised hopes in Dickens's mind of great possibilities for public support for his project and he meant to take advantage, if possible, of the expected presence of visitors to London, and as early as January 5th, 1851, wrote to Lytton, who was warmly working with him: "I think we ought to see about the Queen. I would suggest our playing [Lytton's comedy *Not So Bad As We Seem*] first about three weeks before the opening* of the Exhibition in order that it may be the town talk before the country people and foreigners come. Macready thinks with me that a very large sum of money may be got in London."

In February, Dickens, in company with Paxton, paid a visit to the works in Hyde Park: he thought the building would not be ready in time (a common experience with all exhibitions) but Paxton replied: "I think it will, but, mind, I don't say it will."

Still keeping his eye on the movement of events, Dickens, keen on the success of his own project, wrote on March 4th to the Duke of Devonshire, "... we purpose presenting this comedy at the Hanover Square Rooms . . . We conceive that the changing current of people probably setting into London during the time of the Exhibition might afford us an audience at high prices, about once every three weeks* . . . the first representation of this comedy ought to be before Her Majesty and the Court . . . I have resolved to take upon myself to ask Your Grace if the comedy could be played for the first time at Devonshire House . . . either at the end of April or the commencement of May . . ." As we know the Duke acceded to Dickens's request, and Paxton, as already stated, was called in to design the stage and its fittings in the big Drawing Room, and the performance took place before the Queen and the Court on May 16th.

About this time Charles Knight had a brilliant idea and offered Dickens for *Household Words* a series of three articles on "Three May-Days in London." Always ready for anything that would increase his circulation and keep the magazine up to date, Dickens jumped at it, and the articles appeared. On April 19th "I.—The May-Pole in Cornhill," giving an account of the evil May-Day when there was a scuffle in which 15 people were killed and 400 injured; "II.—May Fair, 1701" on April 26th, describing the scenes of excess and brutality that caused the suppression of the Fair; and "III.—The May Palace, 1851," almost coincident with the Royal Opening of the Exhibition on May 1st, with a very readable account of the great building, and comparison of its 400 tons of glass set in iron and taking three months to erect, as against Aladdin's Palace with twenty-four windows set in gold and silver that was erected in one night. The contrast between riotous scenes and peaceful ones is implicit.

Visitors from all over the world were indeed flocking to England and some time in May Dickens wrote to his friend the American journalist and author, G. W. Curtis, "... As you do not say that you are coming to see the Great Exhibition I conclude that you intend to be *the* man, memorable through ages, who didn't see it . . ." Dickens himself does not seem to have been much drawn to the Exhibition, but he did, on May 27th make an appointment to meet Mark Lemon at the Laborers'

* This was not quite realised; the Exhibition opened in May 1st and the comedy was not performed till May 16th, and thereafter five performances were given from May to August.

Model Cottages (designed by the Prince Consort)* where he was also meeting Sir Edwin Chadwick the Poor Law Commissioner.

Dickens had a few years previously attacked the Circumlocution Office in *Little Dorrit*, and welcomed any opportunity of exposing any form of Government maladministration, so he accepted for *Household Words* a contribution from William Howitt on "A Pilgrimage to the Great Exhibition from Abroad." The title of the article is a little misleading although strictly true, as the stress is on the Pilgrimage and not on the Exhibition. It describes the passage in a very rough sea of a number of foreign visitors (French, German, Italian, Swiss and Hungarian) from Belgium along the Kentish coast and up the Thames to London and draws particular attention to the vexatious delay at the Custom-House on landing; "a hundred and thirty strangers cooped up . . . for several hours . . . so totally out of keeping with every other arrangement for this great and unprecedented gathering of the Nations." And then goes on to demand some mitigation in the conditions.

The following number of the magazine, July 5th, contained an article in which R. H. Horne and Dickens collaborated. It was called "The Great Exhibition and the Little One." and drew an amusing comparison between Stoppage and Progress; Stoppage being exemplified by the Chinese Gallery in Hyde Park Place (now covered by Albert Gate), and the Chinese Junk that he had visited in 1848 when it was moored off Blackwall before being brought up the river to the Temple Stairs. "As the Past was, so the Present is, and so the Future will be." Progress was of course shewn by the Great Exhibition with its huge machines, and by quotation from a pamphlet entitled "Progress of the Nation," that was obtainable on the bookstalls in the Exhibition. The genuine Dickens flavour is often recognisable, but there is one aspect of the modern Exhibition as well as of the ancient civilisation of which there is little or no trace, and that is the aesthetic and the artistic.

Dickens's feeling of disillusionment with the purpose of the Great Exhibition was apparently growing, for on July 11th he wrote to the Hon. Mrs. Watson: "I find I am 'used up' by the Exhibition. I don't say 'There is nothing in it'—there's too much. I have only been twice; so many things bewildered me. I have a natural horror of sights, and the fusion of so many sights in one has not decreased it. I am not sure that I have seen anything but the fountain and the Amazon. It is a dreadful thing to be obliged to be false, but when anyone says 'Have you seen——?' I say 'yes' because if I don't, I know he'll explain it and I can't bear that . . ." There were nine fountains in the main Avenue, and that referred to was a magnificent erection twenty-seven feet high, of English cut crystal glass, by Osler, situated at the crossing of the great transept; the Amazon was a bronze replica, a huge thing, of "An Amazon on Horseback in Combat with a Tiger" by Professor Kiss of Berlin, the original being in the possession of H.M. the King of Prussia.

On July 19th an article by Henry Morley appeared in *Household Words* under the title "What is not clear about the Crystal Palace." It opens thus: "We have not yet formed a very strong opinion on the question whether we shall keep the glass building euphuistically called "The Crystal Palace" on its present site, and have riding and walking in all weathers among flowers, fountains and sculpture as the pamphlet by Denarius proposes. To the question put by the title-page of Mr. Paxton's pamphlet 'What is to become of the Crystal Palace?' we have nothing yet ready in the way of a distinct reply." Then follows a series of pretended letters and opinions:

* After the Exhibition, a pair of these cottages was removed to Kennington Park, where they can still be seen.

(1) From a "Neighbour to the Nuisance" who owns house property injured by the proximity of the Exhibition, and wants to know if he will receive compensation for damage, and adds "To retain the Building for some yet unsettled purpose will I have no doubt benefit the public, and it would be well if a general gain could be obtained without the infliction of a private loss."

(2) From a "distinguished Quack Professor," who objects to a continuance of the advertisement of Morison's Pills as a constancy, as he himself has invented a medicine, not exhibited, of which one teaspoonful took fasting will reduce a fracture, and dislocations are reduced in one minute by smelling at the bottle . . . "Let us inventors all come in . . . leaving out Morison."

(3) From a "Young Lady," who pleads for a continuance of the stalls shewing "those lovely shawls and those sweet muslin dresses . . . where you look at all the shops and need not buy . . ." protected from the weather. "Give the downstairs part to Mr. Swan and Mr. Edgar for drapery and let Mr. Hunt and Mr. Roskell have the galleries for darling jewels . . . send away the policeman, and I will never use anything but *Household Words* for curl-paper."

And finally (4) from a "Practical Man," who criticises Paxton's idea for a "permanent Winter Garden with the climate of Southern Italy and a collection of live birds and geological specimens." He considers it would be unwise and dangerous to go from a cold winter atmosphere into an Italian one, and then back into the winter; he is also concerned about Paxton's estimate for the cost of upkeep, £12,000 a year.

The article concludes, of course Dickens's approval may be assumed, "The success of the Exhibition has been perfect. It is the grandest feature of the age in which we live . . . It must go, and we wish it to go—its part will have been played, and it must not remain superfluous upon the stage . . . the moral part of the Exhibition will be strengthened for the time that is to come, because it will stand out then as a single perfect fact."

The Gradgrind-cum-Bounderby philosophy expounded in *Hard Times*, with the stress on industrialisation, with some neglect of higher ideals and true education, seems to appear in a letter that Dickens wrote to Wills on July 27th: ". . . I have always had an instinctive feeling against the Exhibition, of a faint inexplicable sort. I have a great confidence in its being a correct one somehow or other—perhaps it was a foreshadowing of its bewilderment of the public. My apprehension—and prediction—is that they will come out of it at last, with that feeling of boredom and lassitude (to say nothing of having spent their money) that the reaction will not be as wholesome and vigorous and quick as folks expect . . ."

In August Dickens accepted from Miss Howitt an article for *Household Words* on the "May Festival at Starnberg" and in it he evidently found some reference to the Great Exhibition, perhaps of a comparative nature, as, on seeing the proof he wrote to Wills "In the May Festival of Miss Howitt (very good) for the Lord's love don't let us have any allusion to the Great Exhibition." It was taken out.

Nevertheless, Dickens could not withhold praise from real achievement even by the mechanisation he disliked, and he commissioned Henry Morley to write for publication on August 24th "The Catalogue's Account of Itself." "My father, the Exhibition, certainly begot in me an illustrious son . . . My mother, the Committee, by whom I was brought forth has, I think, been abundantly rewarded for her pains." Then comes a description of its compilation and the questionnaire sent out to "15,000 people of all climes, all tempers, and all manner of hands at literary composition." All the proofs were read by scientific

men and technicians and experts in their various subjects, and the correction of the proofs and their arrangement took Mr. Yapp the editor a month. The final "Official Catalogue" of 320 pages was made up, printed and bound, in four days, the first perfect impression being ready by ten o'clock on the night before the Opening day, May 1st.

The Great Exhibition remained open till October 15th, and henceforth became only a memory to the six and a quarter million people who had visited it.

Have we of the present time yet learned the lesson that Dickens was never tired of preaching? Do we still think that through mechanical progress we shall attain happiness and perfection? Do we still belong to a materialistic age or, are we trying to develop the spiritual portion of our approach towards true enlightenment?

The subsequent history of the Great Exhibition building is already well-known and need only be touched upon lightly. Paxton expressed the hope long since realised, that his example of building a structure of iron and glass would give rise to a big development of such buildings in the future, and also nursed a desire that the product of his genius would be preserved in some way, as he knew it was both stable and durable. Suggestions were made that Government should acquire the Crystal Palace for the nation, but this fell through. A company was formed to purchase it, and it was removed in 1852 and re-erected almost in its original shape on the top of Sydenham Hill where it was opened on June 10th, 1854. In the autumn of 1853 Wills and Sala had been to see how it was progressing—Dickens did not accompany them as he was in Rome at the time—and wrote a joint account which was printed in *Household Words* for December 3rd, 1853, under the title "Fairy-land in Fifty-Four." Sala's personal elaborate style is readily recognisable in the picturesque opening: "O Brothers Grimm, O Madame d'Anois, O Sultana Scheherazade and Prince Codadad, why did you die? O Merlin, Albertus Magnus, Friar Bacon, Nostradamus, Doctor Dee, why did I implicitly believe? Are the Good People, the Brownies, the Leprechauns, the Banshees, the Witch-Wolves, White Ladies, Witches, Pixies, Wiles, Giants, Ogres, Fairy Godmothers, Good Women in the Wood, Genii, Ghouls, Afrites, Peris, Elves, to give up the Ghost?" The article gives an excellent description of the interior of the reconstructed palace with its architectural courts and includes a walk through the extensive grounds of over two hundred acres and mentions especially the lake with the models of antediluvian monsters. The concluding paragraph ingeniously recalls the initial cultivation of the Victoria Regia lily that led to Paxton's first design of a crystal palace and the Great Exhibition building, and the peroration runs: "Do you think I shall have been guilty of exaggeration in declaring that magic and magicians are not dead when . . . such men are among us as the Djinn Josephus Liliensis, otherwise Sir Joseph Paxton?"

A POSTSCRIPT.—On November 1st, 1854, Dickens, in a letter to Mrs. Watson, wrote ". . . the terrific duffery of the Crystal Palace. It is a very remarkable thing in itself; but to have so very large a building continually crammed down one's throat, and to find it a new page in The Whole Duty of Man to go there, is a little more than even I (and you know how amiable I am) can endure."

A FURTHER POSTSCRIPT.—On Monday, June 15th, 1857, Mrs. Dickens and her daughters took Hans Andersen to the Crystal Palace for the first Handel Festival. Dickens did not go; Douglas Jerrold's funeral had taken place in the morning.



BIRTHDAY TRIBUTES

L. A. G. STRONG

AND

DILYS POWELL

THE one hundred and thirty-ninth anniversary of Dickens's birth was celebrated throughout the Fellowship in February. In London a company of more than two hundred gathered at the Dorchester Hotel for the Annual Dinner but great disappointment awaited the guests. Our President, Mr. L. A. G. Strong was prevented from presiding by a sharp attack of influenza. In his absence, our Life President, Mr. Henry C. Dickens, occupied the chair, and we could wish no better Chairman. His principal duty was to introduce Mr. Bernard Brophy, who had kindly consented to read Mr. Strong's speech which was as follows :

IT is not easy to talk sensibly about genius. Genius is not a sensible phenomenon. It is unpredictable, incalculable. Its responses are out of proportion to their occasions. Everything about it is larger than life. Genius lights a match, and starts a forest fire. It opens a sluice, and the tide floods in. Oh yes, genius intended a flame. It wanted water to flow in. But it could not foresee the size of what it had started.

That is the main fact about genius ; it is uncontrolled. No one possesses it. A few fortunate—or unfortunate—human beings are possessed *by* it. They may imagine that they control it, and that it does what they want : but, especially in literature, the first real sign of genius is that the book swamps the purpose with which it was begun. I always like, as an image of genius, the story of Moses in the wilderness, striking the dry rock with his staff, and saying to the thirsty Israelites, " Must we fetch you water out of the rock ? " Water came—but it was not Moses who fetched it. In the same way, genius, striking the rock of occasion, releases a flood of water : the water of life. That is why so many great books, begun with a local, even with a propagandist aim, release such power, such living characters, that they outlast their occasions, long outlive the abuses they were written to remedy, and delight later generations who know nothing about those long-forgotten targets.

Often a genius is at a tangent from his place and time, an outsize misfit, whom it takes a later age to value truly. Sometimes, on the contrary, he rises from the very spirit of his time, from the very soil of his country. When that happens, he not only interprets his own age to himself, but he gives his country a myth which can shape its thought and life for decades. That is what Dickens did. Because of the way his genius bade him write, the English people's way of looking at life has been influenced for a hundred years. The work of a great painter makes us see effects in nature which we never saw before. Dickens, interpreting, in his intensely personal way, aspects of the life around him, showed us a way of looking at the life of our own times ; made us dominant fables and images for our thought ; gave us a myth.

This we can prove by looking at some features of our life and literature which could not have arisen but for Dickens. But, first, let us glance at the threads he picked up, and wove into such a rich and complex pattern. More important, let me guess at what I believe to be his secret, the central fact about him.

Sir Thomas Beecham, who proposed this toast last year, in the course of a speech positively coruscating with autobiography, proclaimed that Dickens was really an Elizabethan, and supported the statement both with wit and learning. He was, undoubtedly, right. Dickens had the immense imaginative energy, the vigour, the gusto, the grotesque enthusiasm of those earlier days. He took over bodily the doctrine of the humours. His people arrive on the page wearing

their labels, and, with a sometimes mad consistency, they never drop them. Take one tiny touch. When Mrs. Gamp, sleeping on her first night as nurse to the fever patient at The Bull, is suddenly awakened by his anguished cry of "Chuzzlewit," what is her comment? "It seemed to make the very bottles ring," a clear, and very probably unconscious reference to her theme song about leaving the bottle on the chimley piece, for her to put her lips to when she was so disposed.

W. B. Yeats once said that, in order to judge any moment or any achievement of past time, we must forget all that has happened since. The immensity of Dickens's achievement will be realised when we see how little he took from his predecessors, how original he was, and how much has happened since that could not have happened but for his work. Of his most characteristic achievement, the Cockney humours of two score characters or more, there were only hints before him. Shakespeare I leave out; he is the universal master. What Dickens learned from the low life scenes in the two parts of *Henry IV*, from *Much Ado*, and many another play, we can only guess. But towards his own peculiar development of this, his teeming London gallery, there were very few pointers. A spark or two in *Bartholomew Fair* and *The Shoemaker's Holiday*, a flash in *Jack Wilton*, a glimmer or two in Sedley's *Mulberry Gardens*; there was next to nothing which could have prepared us for what was to come.

Of Dickens's achievement much has been written and spoken, and I will not take your time in praising what has been so often praised before. Let me instead point to some of its effects. First of all, it has given us a host of writers whom he enabled to follow in his steps and pursue their own discoveries along the paths he had cut. From the forgotten Albert Smith, his contemporary follower—a considerable writer, ladies and gentlemen—to a dozen writers of our own day, we owe a formidable team of talents to Charles Dickens. Would there have been a W. W. Jacobs had there been no Dickens? A Pett Ridge? A P. G. Wodehouse? If so, they would have been different, and lesser writers. Do we not owe to Dickens much of Mr. Priestley? Would Mr. Norman Collins enjoy such fame and popularity but for his great exemplar? Did not my gifted predecessor in this office drink deeply from that stream of living water? If readers have pleasure in anything I have written, I can promptly and humbly tell them to whom they owe it: the great writer whose name I heard reverently spoken by my Irish grandfather, in an old cottage where the 1860's lingered forty years beyond their time, as the old man led me to the alcove where, their backs gleaming in the firelight, he pointed to the row of volumes that for him came second only to Holy Writ. Next, I heard my father tell of his boyhood joys in reading them: then myself read fifteen of them off the reel, and became, for good or ill, but certainly for life, a disciple of Charles Dickens: and, by a happy coincidence, I now work on the board of a firm that was once his publisher.

But there is much besides books which we owe to Dickens. Who is the most complete Dickensian of our time? Charlie Chaplin. That coincidence of pathos and farce, that black-and-white oversimplified view of the antagonists in our human scene, the very outlook on life—you will see them in every one of Chaplin's own films, and, best of all, in his first serious picture, *A Woman of Paris*, which is Dickens undisguised. This genius of the twentieth century we owe to that genius of the nineteenth. And Charlie's accomplishment takes us straight to the other great Dickens legacy—pantomime.

And now I have come to the place where I can put forward my theory of Dickens's secret—the thing in him which enabled him to give the English race a myth and a view of life. I believe, ladies and

gentlemen, that Dickens's secret was that his world was the world of a child. Not childish: childlike. A child's world can be terrible. It is a world of black and white, tall pinnacles of joy, final abysses of despair. It is immediate. There is nothing in it against which the present can be seen in perspective. A child feels tragically, suffers and rejoices with a completeness most of us mercifully grow out of. Dickens, in this sense, did not grow up. He kept the stark antitheses, the violent simplifications of his childhood. All his happy characters, his Mark Tapleys, his Cheeryble brothers, are children. All his villains are the ogres of a child's dream. He never writes so happily, or with such radiance, as when it is about a child who *is* happy. He never writes so magically as when it is a child who sees and feels and is afraid. The first half of *David Copperfield*, the best sustained thing of its kind in our language, is told from the view-point of a child.

And, on the debit side—and, since he was a genius, Dickens's weaknesses are enormous—the immaturity with which certain themes and characters are handled, the failure to come out into the open, the evasions, the crudities—these also belong to the world of a child.

I mentioned pantomime. The pantomime, as it was when I was a boy, and as too seldom it is to-day—the pantomime is the survival of Dickens's world. It is, so to speak, the Dickensian caricature of Dickens's world which, like all good caricatures, reveals it at its clearest. First, entering on right and left; those simplified antagonists, the Good Fairy and the Demon King: the latter to be converted and domesticated, like Scrooge, in the final transformation scene. Next, core of the whole fairy tale, the Dame. Yes, we in England insist that our fairy tales must have a background of realism—"roots in the clay and worms": and there is the Dame, to personify all the drudgery and squalor of the under-privileged, and gifted with a number of disreputable stratagems for overcoming them. Vulgar, genial, resourceful, lovable, she has, wonderful to relate, a son many casts above her in the social scale—the principal boy, gracious and handsome, and devoted to his dear old Ma. And, at the climax of the story, in the last glorious scene, when the principal boy marries the princess, who are the guests of honour at the feast in the Palace? Why, the Dame and her allies, the Broker's Men (minions of the law whom she won over in a trice) vulgar as she is, irrepressible, guffawing out their catchwords: the Dame asking of a dignified page the way to the nearest jug-and-bottle entrance, and producing at the royal banquet her favourite delicacy, welks, shrouded in unmentionable wrappings. There we have Dickens's sociology; and there, in the warm sentimental bridge thrown across the gulf between poverty and splendour, the Dickens fairy tale.

Yes, the pantomime is Dickens's festival, the last stronghold of his world. Everywhere we look in it we find him. Even the song titles bear his stamp: his characters come jostling up to sing them.

It's a splinter from Dad's wooden leg

—there'd be great competition for that, won perhaps by the Artful Dodger, with an exhibit of doubtful authenticity.

When the little bit of chiffon shifted off

—that, with its undertones of marital disillusionment, would be popular in the Weller family.

A short sheet makes the bed seem longer

This would clearly be a duet between those resourceful practitioners, Sairey Gamp and Betsey Prig.

And my favourite song title of them all,

They've shifted Auntie's grave to build a viaduct

—this could be rendered most unctuously by Mr. Pecksniff, and listened to with mournful approbation by Mrs. Gummidge.

And Dickens's London is still with us. In the New Cut, near Waterloo, I overheard a remark made by one huddled old woman in a shawl and a man's cap to another: "If I'd a known then wot I knows nah I'd never 'ave weaned 'im!"

An old gentleman was looking for a taxi, and a small boy ran and fetched him one. As he held open the door for the old gentleman to get in, a bigger boy shoved him aside and held the door, to get the tip. The small boy protested indignantly. "'Ere—come orf it! 'I seen the ole basket first—didn' I, sir?"

I would say then, in conclusion, that the genius of Charles Dickens gave his countrymen patterns of thought which marvellously suited them. It gave those who followed his profession of writer a score of paths to develop and pave and make their own. It bequeathed to us images and metaphors for living, on that side of our natures where, as a race, we are simple and strong. Dickens was a fountain of delight in himself, and a source of the delight we get from others: in fact, he gave us a world so various, so strongly drawn, so warm, so full of life, that it has helped us to build our own.

Mr. Strong's speech was followed by a tribute from Miss Dilys Powell who said:

When through your Secretary you did me the honour to invite me here this evening I will admit I was absolutely delighted. To begin with I am naturally enormously flattered and I am always most happy to be associated in any tribute to that writer, who I think is perhaps the greatest in the world, Charles Dickens. I was also very pleased for another reason, perhaps a rather frivolous one, that the date was so very far ahead. I was seized with a sort of self-confidence for I felt, when the day approaches, somebody will tell me what to say. You will never believe how self-confident I am when given notice. Give me fifty years' notice and I would swim the Channel! Then as the months went by, six months turned to six weeks, six weeks dwindled to a fortnight, and by that time my self-confidence had faded considerably.

So here I am with this terrifying task of paying a tribute. I got up this morning, read the *Times* and the *Telegraph*, and one or two other papers—and everywhere I looked everything seemed to be "all in a muddle" as Stephen Blackpool said. About three of Dickens's books I read every year—amidst the mockery of my family—with tears streaming down my face. These are *Bleak House*, *Our Mutual Friend* and *Martin Chuzzlewit*, and perhaps *Nicholas Nickleby* and *Oliver Twist* every two or three years. A great many of them I don't read very much, and I am afraid *Hard Times* is among them. The other day I was looking through it and the tears began to flow again. "Things are in an awful muddle," said Stephen Blackpool. As I read the paper this morning I thought about the world we live in; it is in an awful muddle—meat rationing, no coal, the atom bomb, Korea—it is an awful muddle.

There are those, though none of them here this evening, who don't really like Dickens—perhaps they think that the work of Dickens is a muddle because it has in it such extraordinary variety of character and person. Mr. Micawber whose finances were so deplorably like mine! The beautiful and aristocratic Lady Dedlock, so terribly liable to be bored. Mr. Turveydrop, a friend of us all, who saw the Prince Regent coming out of the Pavilion at Brighton and raised his hat to him: and the Regent asking: "Who is he, why don't I know him, why has he not £30,000 a year?" Mrs. Jellyby who always had her eye fixed on Africa (that was before the Ground Nuts Scheme!), then like other people she was disappointed. I need not in this gathering dwell on this great richness of character, which is Dickens to us all, yet as I say,

to some people perhaps this wonderful mosaic seems a muddle because of its very richness.

The cinema, of course, tried more than once to reduce Dickens to a kind of order. I am speaking of recent films. Once or twice it tried by leaving out an enormous number of characters and incidents, and once it tried by leaving everybody in but cutting them down to one remark each. You will remember how Mr. Mantalini appeared once and was never seen again. That is understandable in the cinema because it cannot go on for three days on end, which is necessary if a film to take in the richness and quality of one book of Dickens. If you look at Dickens himself it is he who has reduced the world itself to order for us. Not only because his stories come so beautifully, so nobly to a close, but because he never leaves anybody out. You meet a third of the way through *David Copperfield* a poor school-master called Mr. Mell, then you leave him behind and forget him, but on the last page but two of the book, you are told that Mr. Mell is happy in Australia and everybody is glad to know that.

I wish that when I was young I had learned long passages of Dickens by heart. I learned Shakespeare, Shelley, Keats, and they have been with me all my life in times of confusion, uncertainty, and disasters, to tell me something about life that perhaps I have not seen before.

I wish I had been made to learn Dickens by heart, because then I should have had him with me always. I think what Dickens does for us, is that he sees the world as a child; let us remember what Wordsworth said: "At length the Man perceives it die away, and fade into the light of common day."

Dickens to me, makes one think that perhaps, after all, the meat ration, the fuel ration, the atom bomb, are as Mr. Toots would have said, "of no consequence, really of no consequence" because what matters is the human heart and human goodness. The films tried to compress Dickens into an hour and a half, and they did their best—some were very good but you cannot compress the human heart. You cannot put the human heart into a strait-jacket. Dickens reduces for me this ferocious yet rich and wonderful world in which we live, he reduces it to order, he gives it a shape and meaning. I will admit that I am not one of those who think too much of the past or care for too many tributes to the dead or too many memorial services, but on this occasion and at this gathering to this great genius I add a tribute, not as a tribute to the past, but to the present because Dickens is always alive. He is a traditionalist and a revolutionist, he is comedy and tragedy, he is the wit and the heart, and so as you will remember in *Hard Times*, Stephen Blackpool, who had begun and lived his life seeing the world in an awful muddle, died saying "it is not such a muddle after all, but our need is to understand each other better."

And so to me this great genius whom we are here to honour to-night, brings the world out of confusion into order and understanding. He does not simply intensify life but brings it to the levels which we can understand. It is with great pride and honour that I stand here—inexpert as I am compared with all of you in honouring Charles Dickens, but loving him—to pay my modest and most sincere tribute.

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The toast of "The Visitors" was proposed by the Rev. G. A. Parkinson, and the reply was made by Miss P. Durrieu of Auckland, N.Z. Mr. R. C. D. Shuckburgh proposed the Chairman, to which Mr. Dickens responded.

Among the guests was Mr. Baliol Holloway who delighted the company with a recital of the speech of Buzfuz on behalf of Mrs. Bardell. It was interesting to see the distinguished Shakespearean actor turn from the poet to Dickens. Miss Helen Hill's charming songs completed the programme.

EDWIN DROOD ON THE STAGE

By ANGELA THIRKELL

TO describe and analyse fully the performance of *Edwin Drood*, as seen by an overflowing audience on April 21st at the Rudolf Steiner Hall, London, would require a critic capable of being, like Cerberus, "three gentlemen at once." First a professional dramatist who could fully realise the skill and immense labour—a labour of love—with which Mrs. Jane Bacon has reduced an unfinished novel to the bounds of a play; second, a professional to appreciate the stage management of Doris Day and Vincent Sanders (aided by the "effects" of Derek and Brian Greaves), which, with a few curtains and a minimum of furnishing, made us see each scene as a real place; third, a Dickens scholar, capable of following closely Mr. Felix Aylmer's unwinding and solution of the mystery.

Up to the time of Rosa's flight from Cloisterham, Mrs. Bacon is responsible. Whenever one sees a stage adaptation of a well-known and well-loved book, one wishes that one could entirely forget the novel for the moment and take the play on its own merits; and loving *Edwin Drood* as we do, it is impossible not to note discrepancies of time and place. But once having admitted the Prologue (a short scene in Mr. Grewgious's office, transposed from its place later in the book) when Grewgious (John Greaves) gives the ring that had belonged to Rosa's mother to Edwin Drood (Gerry Ellis), while Bazzard (Vernon Fielder) "follows him and witnesses the transaction," we can wholeheartedly enjoy the rest and have the joy (which every re-reading has given and will give us) of hoping with hope and against hope, to find the last word, hitherto unrecognised, that will at last tell the great secret, the *magnum arcanum*, which some authorities maintain was not known even by Dickens himself. With her usual skill Mrs. Bacon has been "snipping, stitching, cutting and contriving" (to use Dickens's own words, though not all Dickensians may recollect the context) and gave us an evening's entertainment that we shall not forget and very much hope to see repeated.

Before speaking of the actors, we may mention that in the Luke Fildes illustrations, the women are dressed in the costumes of 1870, the date of publication, and not in that of 1842, the date which the action takes place and the period chosen for the present production, which was admirably dressed by the Dickens Fellowship Costume Department. Special praise must be given to the really terrifying make-up of Princess Puffer (Elaine Waley—and how delighted Charles Dickens would have been with his grand-daughter) who had every appearance of depraved, hideous old age, down to the kind of beard and moustache, which sometimes accompany it, and the shrivelled, claw-like hands; and also to Mr. Grewgious's wig, "a scanty flat crop of hair, in colour and consistency like some very mangy yellow fur tippet: it was so unlike hair that it must have been a wig, but for the stupendous improbability of anybody's voluntarily sporting such a head."

Mr. Vernon Fielder's Bazzard gave exactly the impression of being "possessed of some strange power over Mr. Grewgious, as though he had been called into existence, like a fabulous familiar, by a magic spell which had failed, when required. To dismiss him, he stuck tight to Mr. Grewgious's stool although Mr. Grewgious's comfort and convenience would manifestly have been advanced by dispossessing him." As Datchery he was physically less convincing, for the young face under the grey wig (Bazzard was about thirty in the book) always betrays itself, but the way in which, before sitting down to his meal in Mrs. Tope's (Sheila Williams) lodgings, he "opens his cupboard door; takes his bit of chalk from its shelf and adds a thick line to the score,"

THE DICKENS FELLOWSHIP PRODUCTION OF THE MYSTERY OF EDWIN DROOD



1. Crisparkle (Ronald George) and Mrs. Crisparkle (Violet Shaw) ; 2. Rosa Bud (Ivy England) and Jasper (Philip Arnold) ; 3. Bazzard (Vernon Fielder) and Mr. Grewgious (John Greaves) ; 4. Durdles (William Varnals) ; 5. Sapsea (Walter MacGregor) ; 6. Deputy (Brian Dixon) ; 7. Rosa (Ivy England), Tartar (Gavin Brend), Miss Twinkleton (Ruth Whittaker), and Billiekin (Madeleine Champion) ; 8. Rosa and Tartar ; 9. Helena Landless (Brenda Beagley) and Neville (Philip Redman) ; 10. Durdles.

Photographs by Brian Greaves

was eminently satisfactory ; perhaps the more so as we are not quite certain—I myself am perfectly ignorant—what the line represents.

As John Jasper, Philip Arnold dominated whenever he appeared, by his looks and his acting. He managed to look exactly like the Luke Fildes drawing and at same time expressed the “look of intentness and intensity—a look of hungry, exacting, watchful, and yet devoted affection . . . always, now and ever afterwards on the Jasper face whenever the Jasper face is addressed in this direction” (that is, towards Edwin). “And whenever it is so addressed, it is never, on this occasion or any other, dividedly addressed ; it is always concentrated.” Upon this detailed description of Jasper’s attitude to Edwin, Mr. Felix Aylmer lays stress and the actor carried it out with faithful skill.

Among the minor parts (if any can be called “minor” when each is a part of the great puzzle) Mr. Crisparkle (Ronald George) again looking exactly like the Luke Fildes drawing, gave the same impression of goodness and rectitude as in the book, with the same courteous devotion to his beloved but trying mother (Violet Shaw), and if Helena is eventually to marry him, she is lucky. The younger people have naturally, in a play where there are such strongly marked characters less personality, but one has to remember that except in very rare cases personality is less evident among young men and women than looks or manners, and if Edwin (Gerry Ellis), Neville (Philip Redman), Helena (Brenda Beagley), Rosa (Ivy England) and Tartar (Gavin Brend), are less forcible than their elders, it is because they are governed by the circumstances that surround them, while the elder people are making or opposing them. So much has to be omitted in “potting” a novel for the stage that the less strongly marked characters must suffer for it ; which does not prevent them for giving excellent presentations of what they are ; and the little farewell between Edwin and Rosa was moving in its simplicity.

The best scene for sheer comedy was the encounter of Miss Twinkleton (Ruth Whittaker) and Mrs. Billickin (Madeline Campion) on the subject of food and boarding-schools, with Rosa forced to be the “shuttlecock between these two battledores.” The Billickin, “enveloped in the shawl of state,” was a worthy peer of Mrs. Gamp, and more one cannot say. As for Deputy (Brian Dixon) whom we had previously seen as David Copperfield, apart from our grandmotherly feelings at seeing him up so late (a feeling which the real Deputy would not have recognised at all) we found him eminently satisfactory and enjoyed his spirited rendering of the word “Kinfreederal.” We think he enjoyed it too.

The parts of Mr. Sapsea (Walter MacGregor) and Durdles (William Varnals) were almost word for word as Dickens wrote them, and the actors gave them full value, while in the epilogue, Vincent Sanders was a good prison doctor, chill and efficient, but not unkindly.

The second part of the evening was devoted to a solution of the mystery in which Mr. Felix Aylmer dramatised the result of many years’ thought and study, and now acted for the first time. Mr. Aylmer has kindly lent me the typescript of *The Drood Case*, being his views, considered over a long period, of the true solution. I have found them deeply interesting but am not yet in a position to give an opinion. I have not given years of thought and study to the subject, so I cannot criticise. But on the case, as he puts it, I cannot yet feel the probability of Princess Puffer’s antecedents, nor can I imagine the Egyptian background that he postulates (giving full reasons for so doing) for the fathers of Edwin and Rosa. Once Mr. Aylmer’s postulates are accepted, the rest follows, and the last scene in prison, where the complete innocence of Jasper (now a dying man) is made clear and his acquittal comes too late, was excellently handled.

FIRST-AID FOR THE "DROOD" AUDIENCE

By FELIX AYLMER

READERS who witnessed the recent performance of *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* at the Rudolf Steiner Hall and who are, at the same time, familiar with the orthodox view of Dickens's intentions in this novel, may well have regarded my indication of the probable development of the plot as a wild flight of fancy. Within the limits set by conditions of dramatic presentation it was impossible to give more than a few hints of the reasons which underlay the view taken. The following brief summary of the course of reasoning pursued may, therefore, be of interest although, once more, limitations of space preclude development of the argument.

ORTHODOXY

Throughout the long succession of solutions to the Mystery which have been put forward, there has been substantial agreement on four points :

- (1) Jasper loved Rosa with a mad passion.
- (2) Jasper attempted to murder Edwin.
- (3) Jasper attempted to conceal Edwin's body in the Sapsea tomb.
- (4) Jasper attempted to destroy the body with quicklime.

The account of the plot given in Forster's "Life" is always quoted in support, although there has been little hesitation in discarding his evidence, when inconvenient, on the strength of Dickens's statement in a letter that his secret was "not communicable." If Dickens had decided not to give his secret away to Forster, or to anybody else, it was reasonable to suppose that he held to this decision.

The arguments have, therefore, mainly turned on the internal evidence of the book itself, and on some working notes of the author which have survived.

Point (1), Jasper's mad passion for Rosa, which provides the motive for the crime, is gathered from two sources : Rosa's confidence to Helena in Chapter VII, and the scene at the sundial in Chapter XIX. Rosa's inexperience, so much emphasised by Dickens, has to be ignored ; as must also the curious improbability of Jasper's voluntary assurance that his love is mad, in face of his six months' avoidance of the lady once Edwin is out of the way.

(2) His attempt (perhaps successful) to murder Edwin is most readily inferred from his partially intelligible remarks in the opium den ; but the suggestion underlies many scenes in the book, and becomes irresistible at the moment of his collapse when Grewgious informs him of the broken engagement.

(3) and (4), Jasper's arrangements for burial and destruction of the remains are deduced from his scenes with Durdles. Here the solvers are driven to make heavy demands on our credulity. Durdles recounts an experience of the Christmas Eve before the story opens. He heard a prolonged shriek, followed by a dog's death howl. He was drunk at the time and comes to the conclusion that the noises were ghosts. We are asked to agree with him. He sounds the Sapsea tomb and finds evidence of more therein than there should be. We are invited to infer that Dickens thereby indicated not that the infallible Durdles was right but that, at some later stage, when there had been time to introduce the body of Edwin, he would repeat the procedure and so discover the missing man. Jasper clinks the keys he carries in order to ensure recognition of that belonging to the Sapsea tomb. Later, he obtains possession of Durdles's bundle, in which this key alone is carried, and when Dickens repeats the word, "Clink!" we are to

suppose that Jasper does not abstract the key, but merely repeats his earlier experiment, although no other keys are now available for comparison. There is more of this kind of *naïveté* and, on the whole, this batch of evidence is the least easy to swallow.

The fact is, that the whole of the case has been distorted to fit the initial assumption of Jasper's guilt, whereas there, staring us in the face all the time, is Dickens's assurance that this assumption is false.

THE INNOCENCE OF JOHN JASPER

John Jasper's innocence of any attempt on the life of Edwin Drood is established by the following passage in Chapter II :

"Once for all a look of intentness and intensity—a look of hungry, exacting, watchful and yet devoted attention—is always, now and even afterwards, on the Jasper face whenever the Jasper face is addressed in this (i.e. Edwin's) direction. And whenever it is so addressed, it is always concentrated." This stage-direction, from which any sort of exception is expressly excluded, effectively reduces all attempts at murder (and burial) of Edwin by Jasper to absurdity. Needless to say, in all the scenes of murder devised by the solvers, reference to this passage, which very formidably applies, is unscrupulously avoided.

I take Jasper's innocence, therefore, as the fundamental condition of the plot, and infer that all that part of it which suggests the contrary is an elaborate edifice built for the sole purpose of ultimate demolition, the object of the story being to show (in Jasper's words) how "Circumstances may accumulate so strongly *even against an innocent man*, that directed, sharpened, and pointed, they may slay him."

THE BACKGROUND STORY

This design calls for the presence in the background of a second story, kept concealed and unsuspected, to which Jasper's mysterious behaviour can be ultimately referred. The existence of such a story (though not its purpose) has been frequently suggested, but I know of no earlier attempt to reconstruct it. I build upon the following hints :

- (1) There is much reference to the East and, in particular, Egypt.
- (2) The Notes, made by Dickens, contain *inter alia* a list of considered titles, one of which is "The Mystery in the Drood Family."
- (3) In Chapter II there is a discussion of family skeletons, and Edwin remarks : "When I consider that even in Pussy's house—if she had one—and in mine—if I had one—" "There is a skeleton," is the implied conclusion of the clause.
- (4) In Chapter XIV Edwin is told by the Opium woman that "Ned" is a threatened name.
- (5) In Chapter IX the two fathers, Drood and Bud, were "fast friends and college companions."

From these I infer that the "Mystery in the Drood Family" provided the skeletons referred to by Edwin ; that, since Rosa's is mentioned in the same breath as his own, it has the same origin ; that it must, therefore, have made its appearance during the period of the father's friendship ; and that its country of origin was probably Egypt. Further, that since it has resulted in a threat to Edwin, one of its features is a vendetta pursued from father to son. To get Drood senior to Egypt we have only to assume that Edwin, in going to join the family engineering firm in Egypt, is following in father's footsteps. The friendship between the two men will account for Bud's presence at the appropriate time. Thus the story begins to take shape as originating in some action performed by Drood senior, while a young man in Egypt, in the company of his friend Bud, serious enough to involve one or both of them in a blood-feud.

JASPER'S PARENTAGE

- (6) Among the Notes is a list of names :

Gilbert

Alfred

Jasper

Edwin

Michael

Edwyn

Arthur

Oswald

Selwyn

Edgar

The significant point in this list, from which Dickens selected the names of his two leading characters, is that they are all familiar Christian names, whereas Jasper appears in the book as a surname. I assume that we may infer design here and that Jasper's name was only masquerading as a surname: he being, in fact, illegitimate.

- (7) In Chapter II Jasper objects to the use of the words "Uncle" and "Nephew" to describe his relationship to Edwin, on the ground that it places a distance between them. Allowing this to confirm the guess about his birth, I infer that they were, in fact, more closely related. The only relationship available is that of brothers—or rather, in view of the illegitimacy, half brothers—John Jasper thus becoming John Jasper Drood. This assumption is to some extent strengthened by :

- (8) The list of titles includes : "The Two Kinsmen" and "A Kinsman's Devotion," which both avoid specifying the relationship, while in Chapter VII, Crisparkle's : "He comes here visiting his relation, Mr. Jasper," has been altered in the manuscript : "Uncle" having been originally written for "relation." Crisparkle avoids the word "Uncle" throughout the book, from which I take it that he is aware of the true relationship.

Here is evidence of one episode in Drood senior's early life which both he and Jasper have good reason for concealing. It may be a more serious matter than at first appears.

THE EGYPTIAN SITUATION

- (9) Although no date is given throughout the story, Mr. Percy Carden, in his *The Murder of Edwin Drood*, proves—conclusively, in my opinion—that Dickens actually defined the date very precisely. He shows that the disappearance of Edwin took place on Christmas Eve, 1842. I accept this date. Since Jasper is 26 when the story opens, he was born in 1816.

- (10) The authority on social conditions in Egypt from 1800 to 1840 is E. W. Lane, whose *Modern Egyptians* is the standard work on the subject. From him we learn that, by Mahommedan law, a Moslem girl who married or lived with a Christian was liable to the death penalty, which was usually administered by her own father or brother.

I have, therefore, assumed that Jasper's mother was a Moslem girl and that she was executed by her father for this lapse. I assume, further, that Drood (in company with Bud) avenged her death by killing the father, and established thereby the threat that overhangs the family. For :

- (11) Lane states that by Moslem law, murder was punishable by death on the "eye for an eye—tooth for a tooth" principle, to be executed by any one of a large group of the victim's family upon any one of a similar group in the offender's family, up to four generations.
- (12) Lane also explains that although it was a capital offence for a Moslem girl to enter a Christian family, the reverse proceeding—

where a Moslem man married a Christian girl—was no offence at all.

I have guessed that Dickens made use of this contrast, and that Jasper's Moslem grandmother was English by birth, and, on the strength of :
 (13) Edwin's amazed look at the Opium woman in Chapter XIV, "for he seems to know her." "Good Heavens ! Like Jack that night," and the old lady's : "Know him ! Better far than all the Reverend Parsons put together know him !" in Chapter XXIII,

I take this old woman to be the grandmother in question.

(14) The law permitting private vengeance was abolished in Egypt in 1842-43. This makes an unclouded future possible for Edwin and Rosa, and so explains Dickens's precision in the matter of date.

Putting all this material together, we have the following story :

In the year 1819, or thereabouts, Drood senior and Bud are together in Egypt. The former is living with a half-caste Arab girl, whose mother was English. They have a young boy—Jasper. One day, in the absence of the two men, the girl's father, having discovered the whereabouts of his missing daughter, descends on the household and carries her off to execution. Drood, out of his mind with grief when he learns what has happened, goes in search of the father, in company with Bud, and kills him on the spot. He is then informed of the consequence of his act, which is that, unless he leaves the country at once, he—and probably his friend Bud as well—will infallibly be killed. They have involved themselves in a blood-feud which will hang over their heads and those of their children and children's children until the penalty of a life has been paid. They make good their escape and return to England with the boy, Jasper. Here they both marry and have a child each : Drood a boy, Edwin ; and Bud a girl, Rosa. To account for the presence of Jasper in the family, Mrs. Drood introduces him to the respectable society of Cloisterham as her young brother.

When the book begins, both Drood and Bud are dead and Jasper has been left guardian to his young half-brother. He is aware of the threat against which he is to guard, but determined to keep the true facts from Edwin.

THE SAPSEA TOMB

We are now in a position to investigate the group of clues which tell the story of his dealing with the first indicated attempt to carry out the threat.

- (15) Durdles's "ghosts," described in Chapter XII, "The ghost of one terrific shriek . . . followed by the ghost of the howl of a dog . . . such as it gives when a person's dead," were heard by him on Christmas Eve, 1841, before the story opens. They point to a death occurring at that date, and Jasper's reaction to the story shows that he knows about it.
- (16) Durdles's account of his sounding experiments in Chapter V, indicate that something has been introduced into the Sapsea tomb besides the body of Mrs. Sapsea.
- (17) In Chapter IV Durdles obtains the key of the tomb from Sapsea in Jasper's presence. Jasper learns to distinguish it from the others carried by Durdles, by memorising the note it gives when struck.
- (18) Later that evening, in Chapter V, Jasper makes a pretext for getting hold of Durdles's bundle, which contains the key, and manages to purloin it, the words "Clink, clink" marking the moment.

I infer from these clues, that an Eastern visitor was intercepted by Jasper on Christmas Eve, 1841 ; that, as a result, the visitor died,

and was buried in the Sapsea tomb by Jasper ; who, finding Durdles about to inspect the interior, stopped this by taking the key.

(19) In Chapter XII Jasper makes Durdles take him on the "Unaccountable Expedition." On setting out he learns of a heap of quicklime lying at Durdles's gate. He is armed with liquor and puts Durdles to sleep. While thus left to his own devices, I follow most solvers in making him transport the quicklime to the Sapsea tomb, where he hopes it will destroy the surplus body. (This body, I presume, was later to be found unidentifiable and accepted as Edwin's.)

What actually happened on the night of this death, was obscure to Jasper. We see him rehearsing the scene in the Opium Den (Chapter XXIII) and, although he can follow the journey with the "fellow-traveller" up to a point, there is then a sudden jump to the moment when :

(20) "The journey's made. It's over . . . It has been too short and easy . . . No struggle . . . etc."

We know from the earlier part of the scene that he has long planned how to dispose of his dangerous visitor, if and when he should arrive, but, now that the thing has actually happened, the act of killing has gone from his memory.

OPIMUM

The explanation lies, I imagine, in the effect of opium on his memory. One aspect of this is indicated in Chapter III :

(21) "In some cases of drunkenness, and in others of animal magnetism, there are two states of consciousness which never clash, but each of which pursues its separate course as though it were continuous instead of broken. (Thus, if I hide my watch when I am drunk, I must be drunk again before I can remember where)."

If he had been under the influence of the drug that night, this would explain his recourse to opium in the attempt to recover the gap in his memory.

(22) To find a clue to the true story of that night's adventure we follow a pointer given by Dickens's note for Chapter XII : "Lay the ground for the manner of the murder to come out at last."

This takes us back to the Unaccountable Expedition, the original purpose of which I suppose to have been a reconstruction of the night of the tragedy, with Durdles in the part of the victim. He is given drugged wine and taken to the top of the Cathedral tower. While there : "Durdles is getting drowsy . . . Snatches of sleep surprise him on his legs, and stop him in his talk. A mild fit of calenture seizes him, in which he deems that the ground so far below, is on a level with the tower, and would as lief walk off the tower into the air as not."

These two symptoms provide a possible explanation of the tragedy. The "snatch of sleep" surprised Jasper on his legs and, during his moment of unconsciousness the "mild fit of calenture" seized his companion, who proceeded to walk off the tower into the air. It was, therefore, an accident and no murder.

Some such escape for Jasper was clearly necessary if Dickens was to convict the Law of condemning an innocent man. If its only mistake lay in the identification of the victim, Justice's withers would remain unwrung.

THE BETROTHAL

I have not yet touched upon Jasper's highly compromising collapse when told of the ending of the betrothal. This has plainly no connection

with the gentleman in the Sapsea tomb, and makes it evident that, if Jasper had known of the fact in time, Edwin would probably not have disappeared. So long as we believe, with the orthodox, that Jasper murdered Edwin to free Rosa from her engagement, his shock is easy to understand, but how can we reconcile it with his innocence?

I see only one possible answer : The betrothal must have provided some form of protection against the threatened vengeance. Its withdrawal without Jasper's knowledge had resulted in his letting Edwin run into extreme danger with what seemed to have been fatal results.

As to how Dickens contrived this, I offer a guess : Jasper's grand mother, terribly shocked at her husband's slaughter of their own child and, being English herself, in sympathy with the lovers, made her children swear that the vengeance should never repeat the original crime by separating a pair of lovers, married or betrothed. To bring into operation this mercy clause, the parents arranged the childhood betrothal.

I am not much attached to this suggestion, but there is strong support for the hypothesis that the betrothal had some such value in the fact that the only person, outside the principals, to know of the broken troth, was the Opium Woman herself, whom we must suppose to have been all along the source of her family's information about their intended victim. And note the peculiar emphasis she places on her critical question : " Haven't you a sweetheart, *upon your soul* ? "

EDWIN'S FATE

I agree with the general opinion that Edwin was attacked on Christmas Eve. The date seems important to the avengers ; perhaps it was the date of the original tragedy. As Jasper was brought within the feud by the destruction of the previous agent, the situation we have inferred and the given facts will be satisfied by the hypothesis that he went out to meet Edwin on his return from the river, and was half-strangled by the visiting executioner, who used the scarf already round his throat ; that, disturbed by the returning Edwin's footsteps, the assailant transferred his attentions to the boy, using the same scarf, but proved physically unequal to the task of killing him.

That Edwin escaped is, I think, clear for several reasons, but chiefly because of Dickens's preparation of his exit from the story. He has just been given by the Opium Woman the warning that he is in great danger, and in terms which point to Jasper as the source.

(23) When he leaves her, the warning " holds to him, as many things much better worth remembering never did . . . the woman's words are in the rising wind, in the angry sky, in the troubled water, in the flickering lights. There is some solemn echo of them even in the Cathedral chime . . . "

If Edwin has nothing left to do but be murdered, this elaborate stamping of the impression on his mind seems purposeless ; but if an unsuccessful attack was made on him that night by someone unrecognisable in the darkness, it provides him with just that suspicion of Jasper that would account for his running away. If he was left with Jasper's scarf in his hands, this would clinch the matter.

NEVILLE LANDLESS

Jasper's pursuit of Neville is the natural consequence of his position as Edwin's guardian. Neville's Eastern provenance, dark skin and immediate and dangerous quarrel with Edwin, mark him at once as a likely agent. (A similar suspicion of the inquisitive and patently disguised Datchery produces later, I fancy, a like quick reaction in Jasper on Rosa's behalf.)

JASPER AND ROSA

There is no space to attempt the analysis of the very interesting relations between these two. I must limit myself to the unsupported assertions :

- (a) that the only threat to Rosa's peace of mind in the early chapters is the discovery that she is falling in love with Jasper.
- (b) that, convinced of the sin of such a lapse while she is officially engaged elsewhere, she tries to persuade Helena (and herself) that her spiritual disturbance is due to nefarious machinations on Jasper's part.
- (c) That, after Edwin's disappearance she develops this idea to the point at which she imagines Jasper his murderer. (The relevant comment on the vagaries of feminine instinct will be found in the first paragraph of Chapter X.) When he calls upon her—as I suppose, to prepare some guard against Datchery (yet another mysterious and inquisitive stranger), in case she is now threatened—her violent rebuff drives him into the curious scene which follows. By the presentation of himself as a mad lover, he succeeds in sending her out of Cloisterham into her guardian's care. That this pose is a pretence is evident from the fact that his words are throughout contradicted by his manner. The scene is largely a parody of the genuine one between Headstone and Lizzie Hexam in *Our Mutual Friend*. Moreover, his uncontrollable passion has not prevented him from leaving her alone for six months !

DATCHERY

I follow the popular opinion in casting Bazzard for the part of Datchery, with the additional advantage that Datchery is no longer to appear as an heroic character. He is in fact responsible for building up the false case against Jasper.

I cannot hope with these notes to have done more than indicate that, in the conclusion outlined in the recent play, there was at least some method in my madness. Readers who happen to possess copies of *The Dickensian* for Oct., 1924, Jan., 1925, April, 1925, Oct., 1925, and Summer, 1927, will there find the early part of the argument dealt with more fully.

Mr. J. W. Kimber. The many friends in the Fellowship of Mr. J. W. Kimber will delight to join with us in congratulating him upon his election as Mayor of Southgate. Mr. Kimber has just completed a year of office as Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Fellowship, and we cordially wish him the same conspicuous success in his new sphere of action that attended his work for us.

C. H. Green. As we go to press we hear with great regret of the death on May 15th of Mr. C. H. Green at the age of ninety-three. Mr. Green was a notable Hon. Secretary of the Fellowship from 1920 to 1925. A tribute to him will appear in our next number.



"WOMEN IN THE HOME"

An Article which Dickens did *not* write

BY K. J. FIELDING

ONE of the most interesting manuscripts in the Dickens House is a short account, in Dickens's handwriting, of the importance of the whole question of Education, and of the influence of women in a family. It is fairly closely written, and not more than about six hundred words long. It was presented to the Dickens House by the late Frank S. Johnson, and was published in the *Dickensian**, in 1927, under the title of "Women in the Home" in the hope that it might "lead to the discovery of the pamphlet in which it was thought to have appeared"; but with the exception of J. W. T. Ley who guessed that it might have been the opening of the article on Education and Ragged Schools, which Dickens meant to write for the *Edinburgh Review* in 1843, no one has come forward to suggest what he wrote it for, and when.

Although in Dickens's handwriting it was, in fact, not really his composition at all. It was part of the preface written by Miss Burdett Coutts and revised by Dickens, to a little book that she prepared and published, called *A Summary Account of Prizes for Common Things Offered and Awarded by Miss Burdett Coutts at the Whitelands Training Institution*. It was published in three different editions: the first in 1856; the second, the following year, much enlarged, with the addition of the preface explaining the work; and the third, in 1860, which was much the same as the second.

It might have been inferred from the manuscript in the Dickens House that it was concerned with this scheme, since particular mention is made of "that kind of knowledge which has of late been popularly called the *Knowledge of Common Things*," and as it goes on to emphasise "the importance of the direct example of Teachers on their Pupil-Teachers and on the children under their care." The whole movement for the teaching of "Common Things," or of useful knowledge to the children of the poor, was well known in its own day, and Miss Burdett Coutts, from the first, was one of the most prominent of among those who gave it their support.

It was started by the very Rev. Richard Dawes, the Dean of Hereford, and inaugurated by a meeting held at Winchester, in December 1853, when Lord Ashburton made a vigorous speech in its support and offered several prizes to teachers and pupil-teachers for essays on "the Knowledge of Common Things." At a time when sectarian controversy was at its height, and no one could agree who was to control the schools, it was the only movement which was concerned with what was taught, and what were the methods of instruction used. It received the passive encouragement of the Committee of Council for Education, but had no other official support, and it was left to private educationalists and benefactors, such as Miss Burdett Coutts, to forward its aims individually.

There is little doubt that Dickens was interested in it from the first, as well, and no question at all that he had a hand in the revision of Miss Burdett Coutts's preface to the second edition of her work. Apart from the manuscript in the Dickens House, several other scattered fragments are known, either in her hand, or his, or a mixture of both, which show the part he took.† They are disjointed, and not very

* XXIII, March, 1927, pp. 106-7.

† The different fragments known are:

(i) The MS. in the Dickens House, "Women in the Home," in C.D.'s hand throughout corresponding to pp. xx-xxii of the preface;

interesting in themselves, but they make it quite clear that Miss Burdett Coutts was entirely responsible for what was said, and that Dickens simply altered the phrasing to make it read more forcibly and easily. It might have been thought from the two passages in Dickens's handwriting, that he contributed something to the preface himself; but in both cases Miss Burdett Coutts's original draft has survived as well. In these places it was less trouble for Dickens to write out a page afresh than to try to correct it, for her handwriting was so bad that it was difficult for him to make the alterations neatly. The opinions expressed were entirely hers, and were sometimes even opposed to those which were held by Dickens.

A few of his letters to her are known which mention the work. Two of them show how they disagreed on the subject of Dress. Miss Burdett Coutts thought that an interest in it was a real temptation to many poor girls, while Dickens held that this did not mean that they all necessarily had to be dowdy and drab. He wrote to her:

"... Now, you will presently go on to say to Mrs. Brown, "what a queer man he is! What odd ideas he has sometimes!" Nevertheless, I can't help saying that I don't agree with you in your approval of the little essays about Dress ...

... I constantly notice a love of colour and brightness to be a portion of a generous and fine nature. I feel sure that it is often an innocent part of a capacity for enjoyment and appreciation, and general adornment of everything, which makes a buoyant, hopeful, genial character. I say most gravely that I do not know what I may take away from the good influences of a poor man's home, if I strike this natural common thing out of the girl's heart who is going to be his wife."

He also wrote:

"With these exceptions—respecting which I nail my flag to the mast with a tenpenny nail at each corner—I have been greatly interested in, and pleased with, the whole book. And I heartily congratulate you upon it."*

Miss Burdett Coutts did not alter her opinion in the least, but made a particular point of answering the objection by including letters from two prison governors, Mr. Chesterton and Lieut. Tracey, in the appendix, giving evidence in her support.

Although Miss Burdett Coutts was entirely responsible for everything she included, and Dickens added nothing original to the preface, it is very likely that she actually introduced part of one of his letters. She writes: *

"The following quotation, taken from the letter of a much valued friend, whose sympathy for the working classes is very sincere, appears so apposite, expresses so clearly and forcibly the results that would attend the exercise of early prudence in life, that it is given in lieu of a feebler expression of the same sentiments: "Not only a man's own happiness, but the happiness of many others, would be much advanced by his reflecting, while yet young, that an income which is quite sufficient, or

* *Letters*, ed. C. C. Osborne, pp. 180-182 (5th March and 9th April, 1857).

Continued from page 140.

- (ii) —and a MS. of the same passage in Miss B.C.'s hand, before re-written by C.D.
- (iii) A single page in C.D.'s hand, with a few words added by Miss B.C., given in facsimile in the illustrated edition of the *Letters of Charles Dickens to the Baroness Burdett-Coutts*, ed. C. C. Osborne, 1931, corresponding to pp. x-xi of the preface;
- (iv) —and a fragment of the same passage in Miss B.C.'s hand, before being re-written by C.D.
- (v) A single page in Miss B.C.'s hand, with corrections by C.D., given in facsimile in the *Letters*, ed. C. C. Osborne, p. 180 corresponding to p. x of the preface.
- (vi) A fragment in Miss B.C.'s hand, with corrections by C.D., corresponding to p. xvi of the preface.
- (vii) A fragment in Miss B.C.'s hand, with corrections by C.D., corresponding to pp. xix and ix of the preface.

Nos. ii, iv, vi, and vii are in possession of the writer.

something more than sufficient for the expenses of one person, can be with difficulty eked out to cover the expenses of a large family; and by his considering that a few years of saving and forethought at that period of his life would lay the certain foundations of a comfortable home. Nor is it requiring too much of him to take these things to heart; because it is not to be doubted that he may be by this means enabled to establish himself in life with even less of exertion, postponement, and anxiety, than has often to be endured by his employer before he can attain the same ardently-desired end. It is of unspeakable importance to their own happiness, self-respect, and rational enjoyment of life, that the youth of both sexes among the working-classes should accustom themselves to thus much preparation and honourable forethought before they take upon themselves the responsible duties of heads of families. Surely this would not be incompatible with that help to morality, domestic virtue, and religious habits, which many whose opinion is entitled to all respect, hold to be furnished by early marriages, notwithstanding the many privations and evils that often follow in their train.

Stylistic evidence alone is never entirely satisfactory; but there are also the circumstances of Dickens's friendship with Miss Burdett Coutts, his keen interest in the work and the help he gave her, and the impossibility of suggesting any other "much valued" friend she had, with a notably sincere "sympathy for the working classes," who could express himself as "clearly and forcibly" as this.

Dickens never seems to have supported the movement publicly himself, but he saw to it that it was noticed in *Household Words*. Directly after the meeting at Winchester, Henry Morley paid a special tribute to it in an article on "School-Keeping," in which he said:

"In the movement which has thus been set on foot by Lord Ashburton, the whole English public claims to participate; the need of much more sense in school teaching, and even (with reverence be it said) in university systems, is so very obvious, that Lord Ashburton's suggestion has gone off like a gun in a rookery and has set every quill flying."

Morley and W. H. Wills also jointly reviewed the first edition of Miss Burdett Coutts's book in 1856, under the title of "Not Very Common Things,"†

There remains the deeper question of how far Dickens's participation in the movement may have given form to his strong opinions on education, and their subsequent expression in the novels, particularly *Hard Times*. For, although it is a great mistake simply to classify Dickens as a "reformer," his creative powers were readily stimulated by something which had aroused public interest; while writing his stories serially, as he did, it was of the utmost help for him to be able to take up a subject for which there was already an impatient audience. After reading some of the literature associated with this movement, there are good reasons for suggesting that although—as Dr. F. R. Leavis supposes—the general themes of *Hard Times* may have sprung from Dickens's sudden realisation of "certain key characteristics of Victorian civilisation,"‡ they were stimulated by actual circumstances; and that Sissy Jupe was as intimately related to Miss Burdett Coutts and the Whitelands Training Institution as Stephen Blackpool to the Preston strike.

* 21st January, 1854. † 26th July, 1856. ‡ *The Great Tradition*, 1950, p. 20.

NEWS CUTTINGS

The Editor again appeals for cuttings from journals and newspapers having reference to the life and work of Dickens, from all parts of the world.

WHERE CRUMMLES PLAYED

BY JAMES G. OLLÉ

ALTHOUGH much has been published about Vincent Crummles and his origins, little has been published about the theatre which was the principal scene of his activities—the High Street Theatre, Portsmouth. This is to be regretted, because its history is interesting far beyond its Dickensian associations. It is with the Dickensian associations that I am chiefly concerned in this essay, but as the story of the High Street Theatre is so little known, I have sketched briefly the circumstances under which it was built and how it came to be destroyed.

Portsmouth's first theatre was a ramshackle building in St. Mary's Street. It was visited once a year by a shabby and intemperate company from Plymouth. The local gentry were so disgusted with the quality of the entertainment provided at this theatre, that they invited John Arthur, of Bath, to build a new theatre and to provide a superior company to act in it. Arthur agreed.

In his anxiety to have the new house ready in time for Portsmouth's annual Free Mart Fair, Arthur came near to disaster. The theatre was due to open on the night of July 20th, 1761, but by noon of that day there was not a seat in the pit and the players could not rehearse because the stage was waist high in shavings. By seven o'clock the crowd of playgoers waiting in the street lost patience: they stormed the doors and took every seat by force, without the formality of paying for admission. Arthur went round the auditorium, cap in hand, and collected what money he could, and the curtain rose at nine o'clock, in a cloud of dust which stifled the words in the players' mouths. The air was hot and laden with dust. The choking, perspiring actors wondered if the theatre would end its career, there and then, by spontaneous combustion.

Somehow the theatre did survive, and although it never became an elegant house, it had its great days. Portsmouth flourished most in times of war; it was then that the town was crowded with naval and military officers, whose patronage could be relied upon to make a season profitable. When the French wars came to an end on the field of Waterloo, Portsmouth entered a long period of distress. The theatre had then to rely upon the support of the local gentry, which was often undeservedly withheld.

The managers tried to attract the unwilling public by engaging leading players from the London theatres, but the uncomfortable state of the High Street Theatre frustrated their efforts. In 1829 the *Hampshire Telegraph* remarked: "It will be advisable for all ladies who intend to witness the performance of Madame Vestris to be cautious lest they injure their dresses, to be well wrapped in fur, and to take the precaution of having a servant to hold an umbrella over them." By 1836 the theatre had become so unattractive that the season of that year was a complete failure. In 1837 there was no regular season at all, and the theatre was opened only once, when the Davenports leased it for a few nights in March and April.

In January, 1838, it was announced that the theatre was to be re-opened for a full season of sixty nights, under the management of Mr. Shalders, who had recently completed a successful season with the Hampshire circuit company at Southampton. This announcement was the subject of the following gloomy reflections in the *Hampshire Telegraph*: "Our theatre is to open in a few days: we hope the new managers will afford somewhat more warmth and comfort in the house than has hitherto been the case, by excluding the draughts of cold air from the audience part, which last season rendered the boxes almost



The Portsmouth High Street Theatre, 1761-1856,
from a colour print in James Winston's *The Theatric Tourist*, 1804-5.
This is the theatre as John Dickens must have seen it.

By courtesy of the City Librarian, Portsmouth.

untenable; that they will alter the arrangement of the gas lights, so that visitors may see with whom they are associated, and that riot and confusion may not take place, without any chance of discovery, from the universal gloom in which the upper part of the house has always been shrouded."

When the season began, on Monday, February 12th, the theatre was found to be completely re-decorated, and the *Hampshire Telegraph* was loud in its praises: "The theatre, indeed, presents a handsome and strikingly new appearance: it is newly painted and richly decorated whilst nothing has been left unaffected that can tend to promote the comfort of the audience." Although the company included no great names, it was a talented one and it was supported by a *corps de ballet* and a large orchestra. The company had one star attraction in Billy Floyer, a comedian who was for many years the idol of the Portsmouth playgoers. On the evidence available it seems that the 1838 season was one of the most notable in the history of the High Street Theatre. The *Telegraph* was enthusiastic from the first week to the last—"splendour which could not well have been imagined"—"boxes literally crowded with beauty and fashion"—"tumultuous applause"—"the dresses were exceedingly rich"—"the orchestra, of which we cannot speak too highly": these phrases are typical of the *Telegraph's* reports. This praise may sound extravagant; therefore it is only fair to say that the *Telegraph* was by no means uncritical and bad performances were severely censured. For example, an unfortunate actor of the 1839 season provoked the following criticism: "Mr. Morton's Alonzo was execrable; this gentleman is never perfect in his part, an offence for which there is no excuse; nor does he possess one attribute that recommends, or ever will recommend him, to the stage."

The 1838 season came to a triumphant end, after the customary series of benefits, on July 3rd. The company then departed to Winchester.

It was early in 1838, presumably, that Charles Dickens visited Portsmouth, in search of local colour for the Crummles scenes in *Nicholas Nickleby*. That Dickens paid a special visit to Yorkshire for material on the Yorkshire schools, is well known. That he also paid a special visit to Portsmouth, in search of material for the same novel, is less well known, for the simple reason that the only record of the event is a tantalising sentence by Forster in the first chapter of his biography of Dickens: "I perfectly recollect, that, on our being at Portsmouth together while he was writing *Nickleby*, he recognised the exact shape of the military parade."

It is probable that the visit was a short one and that Dickens stayed only long enough to study the topography of what is now called Old Portsmouth. If the visit took place in January, 1838, and Dickens saw the interior of the High Street Theatre before it had been re-gilded by Shalders, he may well have found himself among "bare walls, dusty scenes, mildewed clouds, heavily daubed draperies, and dirty floors," facing an auditorium looking "coarse, cold, gloomy, and wretched." The sight of a weather-worn playbill clinging to the theatre's wall, advertising the Davenport season of the previous year, may be the simple explanation of the relationship between T. D. Davenport and his daughter, Jean, and Vincent Crummles and his daughter, "The Infant Phenomenon."

It would be interesting to know why Dickens chose the Portsmouth Theatre, of all provincial theatres, to display the peculiar histrionic abilities of the Crummles family. The obvious answer is, that in seeking a convincing excuse to remove Nicholas and Smike from London to the provinces, where they might fall in with the shabby

company of travelling actors who were taking shape in his imagination, he made use of the old device of setting his hero on the road to the sea, and Portsmouth was their inevitable goal. But this is not a satisfactory answer, for it would not have been beyond Dickens's ingenuity to take Nicholas and Smike to Bristol, Norwich, Chatham, or any other town, had he wished to do so. All speculations as to the choice of Portsmouth are futile, because there is not a shred of evidence to support any of them. With due diffidence, therefore, I suggest that the solution may be found in the fact that Dickens's parents lived in Portsmouth for five years, from 1809 to 1814. It is possible that during that time they visited the High Street Theatre. It is possible that during that time they saw there some fantastic performances by a company of strolling actors, who sometimes leased the theatre for a few days in the long interval between the regular seasons. It is possible that John Dickens, in his flowery, Micawberish way, described to his son, Charles, the details of such a performance, and that Charles remembered his father's anecdotes when deciding upon a theatre for the Crummles's. This may be a fantastic theory, but it is surely more credible than the amazing supposition of Mr. Harvey Darton. In his book *Vincent Crummles: his Theatre and his Times* (1926), Mr. Darton observed: "It is not at all certain that Dickens did not act in Davenport's own company at Portsmouth, in one of the blank periods of his younger life: I feel pretty sure he did." Now Dickens's life has been subject to more scrutiny and research than the lives of most mortals; it is difficult to see why, if Dickens *had* acted at the Portsmouth Theatre, the fact should not have been established. Would Dickens himself have suppressed all reference to the incident? Would he have been more ashamed of being a member of a shabby, provincial theatrical company than he was of being a drudge at a blacking factory? Would Forster, to whom was divulged the shameful secret of the London blacking factory, have been denied the secret of the Portsmouth Theatre? Mr. Darton is too ingenious.

Dickens suffered much from the unauthorised adaptations of his novels for the stage. Three such adaptations were presented at the Portsmouth Theatre and they were evidently very popular, for they were several times revived. The novels concerned were *Pickwick*, *Oliver Twist* and *Nicholas Nickleby* and the collection of playbills of this theatre, at the Portsmouth Central Library, includes bills for all three. *Nicholas Nickleby* was first presented in May, 1839, six months before the final monthly part of the novel was published. The play was described as being "written and adapted expressly for this Establishment." But there was no Crummles! I have tried to show that the real Portsmouth company was vastly superior to the imaginary Crummles company, which supposedly trod the same boards. But if the real Portsmouth players felt that they had been in any way slighted by Dickens, they had appropriate revenge in plundering his novels for their own profit.

Ten years after Dickens's visit the Portsmouth Theatre was once again in the doldrums. Its increasing dilapidation and the opposition of a new theatre at Landport made it impossible to enlist public support for more than one night a week. The end came in 1854. The season of that year was a financial failure, and soon after its close the theatre was sold to the War Office for £3,500. Two years later it was demolished and an extension of Cambridge Barracks was built on the site. Thus, as a wag of the day put it, the theatre had to make way for its best customers. The only relics we have of its departed glories are a number of its playbills and the often all too brief descriptions of its entertainments in the files of the local press and in various old volumes of theatrical reminiscence.

IF IT HAPPENED OTHERWISE

A Dickensian *Dear Brutus*

BY J. H. McNULTY

ON a perfect summer day, at a time not far distant from the present Laughley Tricklebank took the road. He had no particular object in view, except to enjoy the beauty of the country and the season, so whim and weather would decide how far he went and in which direction. As he walked, some lines of Keats kept running through his mind, lines from one of the less inspired verses of that great poet, suggested now by the beauty of the season.

“What is more gentle than a wind in summer ?
What is more soothing than the pretty hummer
That stays one moment in an open flower,
And buzzes cheerily from bower to bower ?”

It was, indeed, a day when nature tries to make amends for past unkindness and is making every effort to please, and we are only too willing to accept her overtures.

A perfect summer day is sufficiently rare to make it thoroughly appreciated when it does occur, but let us not think ill of our climate. It is uncertain, it is changeable, but that is its charm. A few sunny days and we long for rain, a short period of clear skies and we wish once more for the beauty of clouds.

Laughley Tricklebank thought of none of these things, but enjoyed to the full the loveliness of this delightful day. His pleasantly-sounding name might have been famous if the great novelist, who invented it, had used it in a story instead of merely making a note of it.

He walked on steadily during the morning, but as the day declined a desire for rest became more and more persistent, and at last he reached a perfect resting place. The afternoon invited repose, the sunshine had a touch of gold in it, a sign that the day was drawing to a close, and in the eastern sky a ghostly moon was rising. Soon, he thought, the golden sunshine will give place to the white magic of the silver moon. He had reached a grassy plain fringed with trees, among which the white boles of the silver birch, touched with rose by the declining sun shone out clearly, and here, too, was a small hillock made as it seemed, for rest and for viewing the surrounding scene, so still, so beautiful.

Looking round he noticed figures moving among the trees. They were too far off for him to distinguish them clearly, yet they seemed strangely familiar. The people appeared to grow more numerous and after a while, they began to emerge into the open plain, passing before him singly, or in small groups of two or three. The first two whose features he could clearly distinguish bore a queer resemblance to Mr. Pickwick and Snodgrass, but Pickwick was quite thin, his well known rotundity had disappeared

“A thin Pickwick, that is impossible,” he exclaimed.

But no sound came from his lips, at least it was inaudible to him.

“It’s all right,” said the great man, “I am the original Pickwick. Seymour intended at first to make me a long, thin man, but was persuaded to make me stout. You will find many changed among your friends, but we are genuine though different.”

Close behind him came the poetical Snodgrass, who was reciting verses as he walked :

"I am the bard whose muse was mute and still,
While we were wandering by dale and hill,
But now she speaks, and bids you with a smile,
Greet old friends who appear in novel style.
These friends will keep their revels here tonight
And though they may seem different to your sight
Still give them welcome as a kind man should
As they come out to meet you from the wood."

"I always doubted whether Snodgrass was a poet, now I know he is not," was Tricklebank's comment. Two gentlemen now passed by engaged in earnest conversation. One had well-brushed hair, was stout and appeared to be very wealthy and important, he waved his right arm as he walked. The other was clean-shaven and completely bald. He was well proportioned, but looked much less wealthy than the other. The first gentleman was talking to his companion, and though his words were meant for him alone, he spoke as if he were addressing a public meeting, perhaps from force of habit.

For a moment he was puzzled, and then he recognised the well-known figures of Micawber and Podsnap, but how did they manage to meet? Their meeting was possible, but seemed very unlikely, for there was a period of fifteen years between their first appearances.

Mr. Podsnap was holding forth :

"Though your sojourn at Port Middlebay, and your successful administration of that backward colony, my dear Micawber, suggest the post of Colonial Secretary as most fitting for you, yet your knowledge of Finance, and your firm grasp of the principle that expenditure must never exceed income, seem to indicate most clearly that you are destined for the far more important position of Chancellor of the Exchequer, to which I intend to appoint you. I postponed for many years my entry into politics, at length I decided to take the step, and now that I am Prime Minister I feel my duties are even more onerous than those of a Marine Insurer. As Prime Minister I shall keep my hand on the pulse of the machine, and a keen eye on all my subordinates, so that nothing is done hurtful to the British Constitution, the welfare of which I have always had at heart, and that none of my subordinate officials is guilty of conduct which, by any stretch of imagination, could possibly be termed un-English."

Mr. Micawber replied : " My dear Podsnap you place too high a value on my talents, but your trust will not, I assure you, be misplaced. I have never entirely approved of Shakespeare's remark 'Who steals my purse steals trash.' This indeed, was true of my own income which was uncertain as an April day, and of my purse which was usually empty, and literally trash ; but concerning the public revenue I would venture to amend the words of the immortal bard and say 'Who steals my purse steals cash.' That purse shall be closed against all comers, and opened only when the strictest economy would sanction a modest expenditure. You have mentioned my principle, 'That expenditure must never exceed income,' and I will say that whenever, impelled by extraneous events, over which I had no control, I have departed from that principle, I have been overwhelmed with remorse, overcome by misfortune, and hurled to the unfathomable depths of despair, in a word I've been broke."

Two others now approached, a man and a phantom, but here was a mystery, for the phantom bore the well-known features of Scrooge, and the face of the other was unknown. Scrooge is always associated with Marley so it must be he.

"I am Marley," said the gentleman, "Mr. Scrooge died first. He

did revisit me as he was anxious about the state of the business and did not entirely approve of my attempts to improve the position of the staff. I was never such a good man of business as Ebenezer was, hence the state of the business. I had a long argument with him and at length convinced him of the difficulty of bringing up a family on fifteen shillings a week. We are now in complete agreement."

"But this is all wrong," cried Tricklebank, and again his voice seemed inaudible. "It will all come right in the end," said Marley. A fairly young man now passed by. He had the appearance of wealth, but looked as if he were under the shadow of a great sorrow. Tricklebank recognised him as Phillip Pirrip better known as Pip. He said or thought, he was not sure which, "He does not look as if he had lost all his great expectations."

Pip answered his spoken or unspoken words, "I did not lose them, but I lost a great opportunity and I have bitter regrets. Magwitch did not return to England, I heard of his intention to do so through Mr. Jaggers, but I wrote and persuaded him not to come. I pointed out the great risk he ran in such a return. It was true, but mixed with this was my dread of my friends seeing him, and learning the source of my wealth. I tried to persuade myself it was all fear for his safety, but I know shame was the leading motive. To prevent his coming back I promised to visit him in Australia. I postponed that visit, putting it off from month to month, from year to year, till at last the news came that my benefactor was dead. Then remorse at my own cowardice and my lost opportunity of ever thanking him in person overcame me. I have never forgiven myself. My expectations materialised for he left me everything he possessed, a considerable sum. I am rich but I still reproach myself for my ingratitude."

"What about your other friends?" Tricklebank asked, or thought. "The only one who has been really successful," replied Pip, "is Mr. Wopsle or Waldengarver as he afterwards called himself. His first appearance on the stage as Hamlet was a failure, but, greatly daring, he re-wrote the play and in this he was a great success."

A lady and a gentleman now appeared, and the gentleman introduced himself, and said, "You won't know me, I am Nicholas Nickleby Senior. I did not speculate. For the first time in my life I disobeyed my wife; I dare not think what would have happened if I had done otherwise."

"I can tell you," said Mrs. Nickleby, "you would have been as rich as your brother Ralph was or your father."

"But my brother Ralph did not make his money by speculation," replied Mr. Nickleby.

"It was speculation or peculation," replied his wife, "I'm not sure which, but he did make money. And why do you pronounce your brother's name Raph."

"Because, my dear, it is the right way to pronounce it. The L is silent."

"If it's silent what's the use of it," said Mrs. Nickleby, "I hate silent things. If the L in Ralph is silent why not the L in Nicholas or Nickleby. Fancy being called by such a ridiculous name as 'Nickeby'."

"No one wishes to call you so," said the long-suffering husband.

"I still say if you had taken my advice you might have been as rich as Crusoe."

"You mean Croesus, my dear."

"There you go again trying to catch me all the time, but I still say 'speculate.'"

"Speculation is a dangerous game, we might easily have been ruined."

"Fiddle," said his wife, "fiddle, we might easily have made a fortune; as it is we've had to scrape and scrape, and here we are as poor as ever."

"I know that as well as you my dear, but now things are fairly comfortable. Nicholas is completing his law studies and has written two successful plays."

"But we might have been so much better off just think . . ." "My dear," said the weary husband, "we have been over this argument hundreds of times and I'm sick to death of it," and covering an ear with one hand, and grasping his wife's arm with the other he hurried her away.

"Poor man," thought Tricklebank, "his prudence has not brought him peace. I wonder if he would have been happier if he had speculated and lost." A man now passed by who puzzled our friend completely, but after a few moments thought, he guessed Datchery. The gentleman bowed and said, "You are right, Datchery is my name"—as he spoke his features changed and he looked just like Drood himself. "You see," he said, "some people think I was Drood."

"But who are you really?" asked Tricklebank.

"Ah, that is part of the mystery"; even as he spoke another change came over him, and now he looked like Bazzard. "Some readers think I was the confidential clerk of Mr. Grewgious, and I wish to please everyone," said the kind old man.

"But tell me," cried Tricklebank, "How does the story end? Is Drood dead? And did Jasper kill him? Thousands of readers would love to know. Do tell me."

"It would be of no use," said Datchery. "No one would believe you. You see nearly every reader knows how the story ought to end. Dickens himself would find it almost impossible to convince them they were wrong. I must go now. Goodbye. Keep on guessing." As he went another change took place, and he assumed the form and features of Neville Landless.

Sir Leicester and Lady Deadlock approached, and Sir Leicester said with a bow, "You are surprised, my friend, at seeing us. This is what happened. I discovered Tulkinghorn's secret, dared him to do his worst, accused him of blackmail and threatened exposure. He gave way and retired from business and is living a secluded life somewhere in the country. Unintentionally I did him a good turn and may have saved his life. My adopted daughter, Esther, lives with us at Chesney Wold. We are a cheerful party. I should like to take this opportunity of acknowledging the great help I received from Inspector Bucket, a first-rate detective."

Scarcely had they gone when two gentlemen came by. One was easily recognised as Mr. Dombey, now grown much older, but preserving well his upright and distinguished bearing. The other was a much younger man with a strong family likeness.

"My son Paul," said Mr. Dombey, "You see we are really 'Dombey and Son.'"

"But surely your son died," said Tricklebank.

"No," said Mr. Dombey, "after a very serious illness, he recovered. He entered the firm as soon as he was old enough, and showed great aptitude for commerce. He re-organised the business, and dismissed Carker, who is now serving a long term of imprisonment, and the firm of Dombey and Son still flourishes."

A procession of strange creatures now came on the scene. First came a hideous dwarf leading a large rat, tame but treacherous, which tried to bite the dwarf, but at each attempt was vigorously kicked by him. He called it Sampson, and then came a dragon with a woman's face and scales of brass and an enormous cricket which chirped incessantly.

After the passing of these grotesque figures, a complete change took place, superhuman beings appeared. A dark shadowy phantom went by and cast a gloom on all around, after this a series of bright and happy spirits, each a little different from the other, but obviously closely related, for they all bore a strong family likeness. He understood that these were the ghosts of Christmas Past and Future. More and more appeared, there seemed no end to them, "What! Will the line stretch out to the crack of doom?" he cried.

"Yes, to the crack of doom, to the end of time, Christmas will never die," came the answer. A period of silence followed; the figures had all disappeared; something cold fell on his face.

Tricklebank opened his eyes and found himself lying on the hillside, with the moon shining and the dew falling.

How long he had been there he did not know, but he remembered the sun was setting when he sat down to rest. He also remembered it was the twenty-fourth of June, the night of Shakespeare's immortal Dream and of Barrie's phantasy when Mr. Lob played tricks with the destinies of mortals, and if of mortals why not of immortals also? It may have been a dream, but there was logic in it, for nearly all this might have been true IF, in each episode, one event had happened otherwise.

NEW DROODIANA

BY JOHN TOMLINSON

WHEN discussing *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* with a fellow enthusiast some time ago, a second friend intervened with an assertion that the problems arising out of that book were "as dead as the Dodo," I had an uneasy feeling that the pronouncement might have some degree of truth in it, for no book had appeared on the subject, as far as my knowledge goes, since 1935. Now, simultaneously, there arrive two; another dramatic adaptation of the novel has been published in England, and from America there comes a study by Richard M. Baker. Furthermore, in this number of *The Dickensian*, Mr. Felix Aylmer effectively summarises the theories upon which he has worked for so long, his earlier conclusions being already familiar to readers of this magazine.

The play, *John Jasper's Secret* (Samuel French, wrappers, 4s.), is by Eric Jones-Evans who has taken the title of the famous American sequel to Dickens's novel, published in 1871, which at one time was alleged to have been written by Wilkie Collins and Charles Dickens the Younger, but the author is stated to have been Henry Morford. Mr. Jones-Evans follows Morford in causing Helena, disguised as a man, to track Jasper to the opium den in order to listen to his ravings while under the influence of the drug, and in both works Datchery is Bazzard, but in the play Jasper succeeds in murdering Edwin, while Morford's Edwin escapes.

Written in a highly dramatic style, the play would certainly thrill an audience if adequately performed, and even a reading in cold print is a very enjoyable experience. But alas, there is no mystery about the story, for one is in not the slightest doubt about what is going to happen. The author does his work with a minimum of characters; Tartar, Honeythunder, Sapsea, Miss Twinkleton, the Billickin, and Bazzard are all absentees, although we are told that the latter is Datchery. Rosa is to marry Neville, which most Dickensians believe was not Dickens's intention. The Jasper presents a splendid opportunity for a good melodramatic actor—but why is he stated to be forty? Dickens tells us he is twenty-six.

The Drood Murder Case, by Richard M. Baker (University of California Press, \$3), consists of five articles which have recently

appeared in several issues of *Nineteenth Century Fiction*, and will be accorded a warm welcome from Droodists.

The Datchery problem is dealt with first, and we are informed of good reasons (good to Mr. Baker, at any rate) why the "buffer" cannot be Bazzard, Drood, Tartar, Helena, Neville, or a new character. Therefore, only the "angular" Grewgious is left, and many pages are devoted to putting forward his case. I think G. K. Chesterton put the Grewgious case "in a nutshell" when he said there was little point in one grotesque character disguising himself as another grotesque character actually less amusing than himself. I doubt if Mr. Baker's clever reasoning will gain the lawyer many adherents.

Mr. Baker errs in one respect concerning Comyns Carr's unpublished play, produced by Beerbohm Tree. He says that that play favours the theory that Datchery was Edwin, an error which may be traced to Cuming Walter's "table" at the end of *The Complete Edwin Drood*, whereas, although Datchery did not appear on the stage, we are told that he was Bazzard.

Mr. Baker deals with the guilt of John Jasper and tells us that Dickens had given the choir-master a nature akin to his own in which good and evil warred for the mastery. Evidently the evil triumphed as far as Jasper was concerned. Edmund Wilson, I believe, started that strange theory. We are given interesting facts about "An Experience" and "The Disappearance of John Ackland" in *All the Year Round*, followed by a study purporting to show how Dickens meant Drood to be murdered, making him an unsympathetic figure whom readers would not wish to see brought back.

Finally, the end of the story is discussed and some of the minor characters dealt with. In short, each of this book's 195 pages will delight the student of Dickens's half-told tale. After all, no one's "solution" will satisfy everyone. We shall each of us cling to our own theories, and remain convinced that people cherishing others have missed the subtle clues that our own perspicacity has divined in the text of this eternal mystery.

THE DICKENS HOUSE ENDOWMENT FUND (WALTER DEXTER MEMORIAL)

						Branch	
						Total to date.	
					£ s. d.	£ s. d.	
Auckland—Miss P. Durrieu	..	..	..	..	5 0 0	10 10 0	
Bath	..	..	..	..	3 7 3	32 10 2	
Blackburn	14	2	0				
Mr. and Mrs. W. E. Hamm	0	10	6				
Mr. and Mrs. McArthur	0	4	6				
Brisbane—Mr. F. T. Cross	..	..	..	..	14 17 0	100 7 0	
Christchurch	..	..	..	..	0 12 0	12 14 0	
Edmonton	..	..	..	..	15 0 0	33 16 0	
Guilford	..	..	..	..	9 0 0	39 1 0	
Hatfield—Mr. Greaves's Recital	..	..	..	..	9 17 8	9 17 8	
Los Angeles—Miss Virginia du Palais Twigg	..	..	..	..	1 10 0	7 2 6	
Lytham St. Annes—Mr. Greaves's Recital	..	..	..	..	4 0 0	21 10 0	
Preston—Mr. Greaves's Recital	..	..	..	..	4 0 0	30 2 0	
Rugby	..	..	..	..	2 2 0	38 13 6	
Mrs. Hudson's Whist Drive	..	..	..	..	6 14 6		
In Memory of Mr. F. Lucking	..	..	..	..	1 12 0		
Southend—Mr. Greaves's Recital	..	..	..	..	1 5 6	29 0 6	
Vancouver—In memory of Mr. A. M. Colban	..	..	..	..	2 2 0	161 9 0	
Mrs. Colban, in memory of my dear husband	..	..	..	..	21 14 11		
					16 15 6	83 5 5	
HEADQUARTERS							
Dramatic Performance— <i>The Mystery of Edwin Drood</i>	..	..	..	..	20 0 8		
Sale of Books	..	..	..	..	20 0 0		
Miss Greatwood and Miss Minards—Whist Drive	..	..	..	..	5 0 0		
Mr. W. A. MacGregor—Lecture	..	..	..	..	3 3 0		
Mr. John Greaves—Recital	..	..	..	..	3 3 0		
Per Mr. and Mrs. Dale	..	..	..	..	2 2 0		
Mr. Daniel Riley McMaster	..	..	..	..	0 19 0		
Mr. W. E. Rawnsley	..	..	..	..	0 5 0		
Mr. W. F. Gambrill	..	..	..	..	0 2 6	1,367 9 8	
Total to date : £6,307 14s. 1d.							

NOTES ON *Sketches by Boz*

By T. W. HILL

XXI—BROKERS' AND MARINE STORE SHOPS

Morning Chronicle, December 15th, 1834. see p. 67.

1. AT THE BACK OF LONG ACRE. It has been suggested that, by the description, this was intended for Monmouth Street, to which a Sketch had already been devoted. (See Scenes VI.)

2. MARINE STORES. Originally applied to the shops in seaport towns that supplied all manner of oddments useful on board ship; and gradually applied, after the passing of the old "wooden walls," to any shops that dealt in odds and ends and second-hand goods and clothing.

3. ROYAL COBURG THEATRE. In Waterloo Road, this theatre was opened in 1818 and named after Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg (see Our Parish, II). In 1833 its name was changed to The Victoria, in honour of the future queen, and is now affectionately The Old Vic. It was the home of melodrama and "Tongo the Denounced" is a fictitious play of that nature.

4. PLATES OF THE SUN FIRE OFFICE. All the Fire Offices, now known as Insurance Companies, affixed their own plate to the premises covered by their policies. The "resplendent ornaments" mentioned may have been large pendants worn on the breast—badges of knighthood, etc.

5. RATCLIFF HIGHWAY. At one time a disreputable thoroughfare, this street was cleaned up many years ago and renamed St. George's Street. It has since 1937 been included in The Highway running from East Smithfield to Stepney. Note the oysters, associated with poverty, and the pickled salmon beloved of cockneys on holiday. (See also Scenes XII.)

6. KING'S BENCH PRISON AND IN THE RULES. The prison was in Borough High Street at the corner of Borough Road; it was pulled down in 1880. The Rules was the district adjoining the prison, within which prisoners might reside on payment of a consideration and on giving security that they would not go beyond the limits of the district. Mr. Bray in *Nicholas Nickleby* lived in The Rules.

XXII—GIN-SHOPS

(Evening Chronicle, February 7th, 1835)

1. SPACIOUS PREMISES WITH STUCCOED FRONTS. Until Queen Anne's reign the staple drink of the common folk was beer; then came the tea, coffee, and spirits from abroad, with the triumph of gin, which was cheap and ardent. Its use spread so rapidly that Lecky has called it the "gin epidemic." Gin-palaces with glaring exteriors and bright interiors sprang up all over London until, in George II's reign, the evil reached its height. Hogarth devoted one of his most mordant satires to it in "Gin-Lane." In 1736 the Government tried to stop the curse by putting a duty of 5s. a gallon on gin, but this was not effective enough, so in 1746 the duty was raised to 30s. a gallon, and in 1750 no less than 1,700 gin-shops were closed. This caused some improvement, but as this Sketch shews, gin was still a popular drink in the early nineteenth century.

2. KERVORTEN AND A THREE-OUT. Kervorten is a cockney rendering of quartern (note the substitution of "v" for "w," many instances of which occur in Sam Weller's speech in *Pickwick Papers*). A three-out glass is one holding threepennyworth, the usual price of a nogginful. (See also Scenes V, note 10).

3. RUM-SRUB. A mixture of lemon juice, sugar, and a little rum. Mildly alcoholic, it was much liked by ladies, indeed almost teetotal when compared with really strong spirits. It was chosen in *Characters IV* for Miss J'mima Ivins and her friend in the Crown. Mr. Omer, in *David Copperfield*, found that for his asthma it was "softening to the passages."

XXIII—THE PAWNBROKER'S SHOP

(Evening Chronicle, June 30th, 1835)

1. AS LARGE AS FERGUSON'S FIRST. James Ferguson, the astronomer (1710-1776) in his *Autobiography* prints an account of his early effort at watch-making: "a watch with wooden wheels and a whale-bone spring . . . I enclosed the whole in a wooden case very little bigger than a breakfast tea-cup." Ferguson, practically self-taught, was a mechanical genius, a confirmed model-maker, and had many inventions to his credit.

2. INSECTS IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM. This was true for the period; the entomological collections were removed to the Natural History Museum in 1883, a portion being exhibited at the Bethnal Green Museum.

3. NUMBER OF LITTLE DENS OR CLOSETS. This pawnshop was similar in its arrangement to that at which Young Martin Chuzzlewit obtained a loan of three pounds on his watch on his arrival in London.

4. HOW REGULARLY ROUND MY HAT I FELT. In Scenes XVII "Round my hat" expresses indifference, and here the indifference is due to confusion caused by bewilderment of the senses.

5. UP THE SPOUT. Spout was the slang term for a sort of shoot or chimney, up which articles left at a pawnbroker's were removed from the shop to a store-room above. Hence anything gone "up the spout" might be regarded as practically lost. Jingle, in the Fleet prison, knew the meaning of the word, but Mr. Pickwick came to the rescue and redeemed his clothes.

XXIV—CRIMINAL COURTS

(Specially written for the Second Series, 1837)

1. FETTERS OVER THE DEBTORS' DOOR. These grim decorations disappeared with the old Newgate Prison in 1902. They were of course, only architectural features of the building and were many sizes larger than actual fetters.

2. HALF AND HALF. A mixture of mild ale and bitter in equal quantities.

3. MR. KETCH. The generic name for the executioner, perpetuated by Punch and Judy shows. John Ketch was in office for thirty years and officiated at the execution of Lord William Russell in 1683 in Lincoln's Inn Fields, and of the Duke of Monmouth in 1685 on Tower Hill.

4. MRS. FRY . . . MRS. RADCLIFFE. This sentence seems to express an opinion that Elizabeth Fry's revelations of prison conditions were more shocking than the manufactured horrors of Ann Radcliffe's mystery romances. Thomas Hood, in a "Friendly Address to Mrs. Fry in Newgate" (1825) also hints that her accounts of Newgate are rather hideous.

5. BOUQUET. During the summer session the judges, sheriffs and under-sheriffs all carry bouquets of old English garden flowers. (See note 7).

6. PAID FOR THEIR ADMISSION. A rather discreditable system of allowing warders to receive payment from sightseers or sensation-seekers to gain access to the courts. It is now abolished.

7. HERBS WHICH ARE STREWED. The custom of strewing sweet herbs on the floor of the court and on the ledges of the dock is still observed. It was originally a precaution against gaol fever and an antidote for the horrible smells emanating from the prison cells.

8. FIFTEEN GEN'L'M'N IS A VATEN. A foretaste of the more elaborate description of the Artful Dodger's impertinence to the Bow Street magistrates in *Oliver Twist*.

9. SEVEN YEARS' TRANSPORTATION. A severe but not an uncommon sentence for a lad of thirteen.

XXV—A VISIT TO NEWGATE

(Specially written for the First Collected Edition, 1836)

1. NEWGATE. Dickens made several visits to Newgate in his early manhood, and this sketch is a record of his first visit. He went again with Forster while he was writing *Barnaby Rudge*, and he makes use of his knowledge in *Great Expectations*. His descriptions can be relied on as accurate for the old prison pulled down in 1902.

2. IF BEDLAM COULD BE REMOVED . . . An odd thought perhaps induced by Dickens's early acquaintance with Aladdin's story in the Arabian Nights. At the time of the Sketch Bethlehem Hospital was in St. George's Road, Lambeth, whither it had been removed in 1814-15 from Moorfields. In 1931 the patients were transferred to new and beautiful premises at West Wickham, Kent, and the old grounds were opened as a public park. The building now houses the Imperial War Museum.

3. BISHOP AND WILLIAMS. Two "body-snatchers" who were hanged on December 5th, 1831 (the memory was therefore recent) for decoying and drowning an Italian boy to "dispose of his remains for the benefit of science." In the *Tale of Two Cities* Jerry Cruncher's secondary profession of "fishing" is made to serve a subsidiary rôle in the plot. The taking of plaster casts is alluded to (in Jagger's office) in *Great Expectations*: "The cast was made in Newgate directly after he was taken down. You had a particular fancy for me, hadn't you, Old Artful?"

4. JACK SHEPPARD—GENUINE; DICK TURPIN—DOUBTFUL. Jack Sheppard (1702-1724) was notorious for his numerous escapes from Newgate. He was hanged at Tyburn (see Harrison Ainsworth's novel); DICK TURPIN

(1705-39) highwayman, horse-thief, and murderer, was hanged at York. (See Ainsworth's Rookwood).

5. OLD BAILEY. Running from Newgate Street to Ludgate Hill and parallel with the old City wall. The name is also applied to the Central Criminal Court. The sketch gives a very reliable topographical description of the locality in 1835, but it has since been much modified, the College of Physicians having been removed in 1825 to Trafalgar Square (Pall Mall East), the building becoming the Hall of the Cutlers' Company. (See Dickens's footnote).

6. SESSION HOUSE. Now incorporated in the Central Criminal Court.

7. NEWGATE MARKET. This was closed in 1869 when Smithfield Market was reconstructed; the site is approximately that of Paternoster Square, devastated in the war of 1939-1945.

8. SMALL STUMP BEDSTEAD. A bedstead without posts or frame above the mattress level and similar in appearance to a camp-bed. In *Pickwick Papers* chap. XLIV, the Chancery Prisoner died on a stump bedstead.

9. GRATINGS WITH AN INTERMEDIATE SPACE. This is more particularly described in *The Old Curiosity Shop* where Kit is visited in prison by his mother and Barbara's mother.

10. "TURN AND FLEE FROM THE WRATH TO COME." Adapted from Scripture "O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" Matthew, iii, 7; and Luke, iii, 7.

11. NO HOPE IN THIS WORLD. The last part of this Sketch is the first instance of Dickens's analysis of the mind of a condemned criminal. He returned to the subject, varying the circumstances, in *Nicholas Nickleby* with Squeers awaiting execution, in *Oliver Twist* with Fagin, and in *Barnaby Rudge* with Hugh and Dennis, and, according to Forster his original idea for finishing the *Mystery of Edwin Drood* was to place Jasper in the condemned cell.

* * * * *

CHARACTERS

I—THOUGHTS ABOUT PEOPLE (*Evening Chronicle* 28th April, 1835)

1. BUCKLESBURY. A thoroughfare connecting Poultry with Walbrook; a part of the middle section was sliced away when Queen Victoria Street was constructed in 1869-71.

2. RUSSELL SQUARE. Now given up largely to offices, societies and private hotels, this square was at one time a collection of fine, almost princely, residences for well-to-do professional people and city merchants.

3. HESSIAN BOOTS. A kind of top-boot in which the "top" was not turned down, the leg was shaped to the calf, and a tassel finished it off in front. It was worn mostly by military officers and was also worn with outdoor costume.

4. NEW POLICE. Peel's Police Act of 1829 constituted the Metropolitan Police, modelled in part on the City Police; they were a much more efficient body of men than the Charlies or Watchmen whom they replaced; hence the "wholesome dread" referred to.

5. ST. CLEMENT'S. Observe the succession of clocks on the way to St. James's Park: ST. CLEMENT DANES, built 1680, associated with the nursery rhyme "Oranges and Lemons"; New Church, ST. MARY-LE-STRAND, of a later date (1724) than St. Clement's; EXETER 'CHANGE erected 1676 on the site of Exeter House, demolished in 1829 to give place to Exeter Hall erected in 1831; that in turn was pulled down in 1907 to make way for the Strand Palace Hotel; ST. MARTIN'S-IN-THE-FIELDS, built 1721 at the corner of what is now Trafalgar Square; and so to the HORSE GUARDS, so named from the four regiments of cavalry whose headquarters it is, built in 1753.

6. BROOKS'S AND SNOOKS'S, ETC. An excellent double antithesis; Brooks's was an old-established and very exclusive club whereas Snooks's stands of course for nobodies; Crockford's, another exclusive resort of card and dice players for high stakes, whereas Bagnigge Wells had for its patrons the middle classes.

II—CHRISTMAS DINNERS (Originally called "Christmas Festivities" in *Bell's Life*, December 27th, 1835)

1. CHRISTMAS TIME. A period of the year sacred to Dickens. This rather jolly Sketch is a fitting prelude to the frequent recurrence of the theme

in his later works. Dingley Dell in *Pickwick Papers* will never be forgotten; the Six Christmas Books and the papers in *Household Words* "A Christmas Tree" and "What Christmas is as we grow older" all shew his love for the season, and in his last novel Christmas Eve was the date chosen for the incident on which the whole story revolves.

III—THE NEW YEAR (*Bell's Life*, January 3rd, 1836)

1. QUADRILLE PARTY. There were two meanings to the word quadrille: the card game for four persons, at that time rapidly falling out of fashion, but played at Doughty Street when Dickens was living there 1837-39, and the square dance for four couples. Here the dance is meant as the carpet has been taken up. (See also *Tales III*.)

2. MR. TUPPLE. It seems possible that here we have the germ from which Mr. Tupman grew, even including the name. "Perfect ladies' man . . . dances . . . so romantic . . . quite a love . . . toasts the ladies."

IV—MISS EVANS AND "THE EAGLE" (*Bell's Life*, October 4th, 1835)

1. HE CAME AND CONQUERED. Evidently an adaptation of Julius Caesar's announcement of his victory over Pharnaces at Zela in Asia Minor, B.C. 47: "Veni, vidi, vici."

2. SECLUDED PART OF CAMDEN TOWN. Is this a veiled allusion to Bayham Street where the Dickens home was in 1823?

3. SEVEN AND SIXPENNY GREEN. Green tea was a luxury as can be realised by the price quoted. Hyson is the best known kind.

4. PINT OF SHRIMPS . . . IN A CLEAN BELCHER. Shrimps were commonly measured in a pewter beer-pot, and carried home in a handkerchief; now of course it is usually a paper bag.

5. THE EAGLE. The Eagle Tavern and Grecian Saloon was in the City Road, well-known and popular as a place of entertainment from 1824 to 1882 when it became the property of the Salvation Army. It was demolished in 1899, but the name survives in a modern public-house on the site. (See *Wroth's Cremorne and the later London Gardens*, 1907.)

6. DENMARK SATIN SHOES. (See *Scenes VI*, note 7).

7. THE CROWN. This house no longer exists, the site being occupied by No. 128 Pentonville Road. The inn had a large garden in which customers could consume their beverages.

8. SHRUB. (See *Scenes XXII*).

9. ROTUNDA. The large concert hall; it accommodated over 1,000 people.

10. GENTLEMAN WITH LARGE WHISKERS. It has to be repeated that large whiskers, especially if silky, were greatly admired at the time. (See also *Scenes III*, note 2).

11. MISS SOMEBODY. This was probably Miss Fraser James whose portrait appears in *Wroth's* book mentioned in note 5 above.

12. THE SOLDIER TIRED. A song immensely popular with soprano vocalists; it was written by Dr. Arne to his own translation of Metastasio's "Artaserse":

"The soldier, tired of war's alarms,
Forswears the clang of hostile arms . . ."

13. ANCORE. The supposedly correct pronunciation of the French *encore* (again, or once more). In the *Old Curiosity Shop* Kit Nubbles at Astley's makes another effort: An-kor.

V—THE PARLOUR ORATOR

(Originally called "The Parlour" in *Bell's Life*, December 13th, 1835)

1. OXFORD STREET . . . NEW ROAD. The New Road was re-named Euston Road about 1838. This "lounge" of Dickens's is typical of his walking powers, for it is a round of about seven miles back to Furnival's Inn where he was living at the time.

2. £20,000,000 PAID FOR 'MANCIPATION. Largely through the efforts of William Wilberforce (1759-1833) the slave-trade was abolished in 1807, but slavery remained. Wilberforce continued his work for the emancipation of the existing slaves and though declining health compelled his retirement from Parliament in 1825, he survived till 1833 to see the Emancipation Bill receive its second reading. The cost to the nation was £20,000,000 and as this was

only two years before the Sketch was written the memory of it would be fresh in readers' minds.

3. BEER-CHILLER. A pointed tin or copper vessel for insertion among the glowing embers of the fire for mulling wine or beer. Dickens's name for it is curious; the process does not chill the beer; it takes the chill off. The modern trade-name is beer-warmer.

VI—THE HOSPITAL PATIENT.
(*Carlton Chronicle* August 6th, 1836)

1. PICKPOCKET . . . IN A WHEELBARROW. Nowadays the police would strap a recalcitrant prisoner on a stretcher if necessary and take him away in a vehicle.

VII—THE MISPLACED ATTACHMENT OF MR. JOHN DOUNCE.
(Originally called "Love and Oysters" in *Bell's Life*
October 25th, 1835)

1. CIRCULAR TABLE AT OFFLEY'S. Offley's, in Henrietta Street, Covent Garden, was an old tavern that specialised in chops and Burton ale.

2. RAINBOW TAVERN IN FLEET STREET. This was near Inner Temple Gate; it had been first a coffee-house known also as Nando's and dated from about 1657. It was rebuilt in 1860. The site is now occupied as a bodega, No. 15 Fleet Street, and still retains the old name "The Rainbow."

3. LONG CHERRY-STICK PIPES. They have long gone out of fashion, but a few lingered in tobacconists' shops until the early years of this century.

4. CURSOR STREET. A name that is a reminder that this is Legal-Land. A Cursitor was an officer of the Court of Chancery, whose business it was to make out original writs. The office was abolished in 1835.

5. REGULAR AS CLOCK-WORK, ETC. Routine and time-table as evidence of respectability was to be repeated more than thirty years later in *Our Mutual Friend* by Mr. Podsnap.

6. SIR SOMEBODY'S HEAD. An invented sign, but probably modelled on such an inn as the "Sir Paul Pindar's Head" in Bishopgate; there are indeed two "heads" in Chancery Lane that Mr. Dounce might have patronised: the "King's Head" and the "Pope's Head." Dickens may have had a reason for the discreet anonymity.

7. TWO ACTS OF A FIVE-ACT PLAY. This would be the "break" at which half-time prices would be available. (See also *Characters* XI).

8. CELEBRATED MASTER BETTY. William Henry West Betty (1791-1874) Known as the Young Roscius, he made his debut at the age of eleven and played Hamlet when sixteen. He retired from the stage in 1824 (this gives a date for Mr. Dounce's romance) aged only 33.

9. THOSE AT EIGHT-PENCE. That is per dozen; they must have been the best in the shop.

10. REGULAR LADIES' GROG. Grog is said to have got its name from Admiral Vernon (1684-1757) known to his sailors as Old Grog because he wore coarse grogram garments. The men's rum ration was by his orders mixed with water, and the word grog soon came to mean any spirits and water. Ladies' grog was generally compounded with gin or brandy; its characteristics as given are, one hopes a libel.

11. COOLING HIMSELF WITH AN OYSTER. Oysters being one of the most easily digested foods and therefore non-heating, acquired a reputation for being actually cooling in their effects. Perhaps the fact that they are mostly taken raw and cold had psychological influence in spreading the fable.

12. CHEAP MINIATURE-PAINTER. Here is the first indication of Dickens's penchant for poking fun at portraiture. Note the resemblance between this description and that of one of Miss La Creevy's miniatures: "a literary character with a high forehead a pen-and-ink, six books, and a curtain." (*Nicholas Nickleby* chapter III). Recall also the portraits of Barnacle and Mr. Finching in *Little Dorrit*, and of the Dedlock picture gallery in *Bleak House*.

13. UNMITIGATED OLD SARACEN. A figurative use of the Eastern people with whom Dickens was familiar from his intimate knowledge of the Arabian Nights. His Saracens were polygamous, tyrannical, and much given to luxurious living.

CURTAIN UP ON *A CHRISTMAS CAROL*

BY MALCOLM MORLEY

SHORTLY before Christmas 1843 *A Christmas Carol* made its initial appearance in print. This, the first in the series of seasonal stories by Dickens, was an immediate success and the eyes of play-hacks eagerly scoured its pages seeking drama for the stage. Edward Stirling was one of them. To date he had piloted every novel by Boz to the theatre and the material of *A Christmas Carol* would seem to him to be stage proof. His work was soon done. The sequence of

situations in the book were easily fitted into the pattern of a play; dialogue from the pages was flavoured with stage-stuffing by Stirling and places found for some eight or nine songs, old and new, all very Christmassy. At the beginning of the New Year the piece was in rehearsal at the Adelphi Theatre, and, what is more the sanction of Dickens had been secured for the adaptation. Such approval must have been a small triumph for the playwright considering the annoyance he, among others, had previously caused the author by seizing and distorting his early tales for use in the theatre. In the present case the novelist appears to have accepted Stirling without question as the adapter of his work, whatever objections he may have had to the pilferings of that gentleman in the past. The dramatisation at the Adelphi was to be, in its way, the one and only official stage version.



Edward Stirling

from *Actors by Daylight*, 1838.

by Courtesy of the Enthoven Collection
Victoria and Albert Museum.

Many unofficial versions were soon in the making. C. Z. Barnett, attached to the Surrey Theatre, lost no time in following Stirling's example of leading *A Christmas Carol* to the stage. Charles Webb at Sadlers Wells did the same. There was a rush of rehearsals, with the result that on Monday, February 5th, 1844, three adaptations appeared on the same evening. Be it said, however, the appeal was to differently graded audiences at each of the three playhouses where the work reached the boards. The Adelphi, then as now in the Strand, was a central theatre. True it was not a genuine Theatre Royal, hall-marked with a patent like Drury Lane, Covent Garden or the Haymarket, but it was a popular house patronised in the higher priced seats by more or less affluent playgoers who were not without a measure of discrimination. Although melodrama was the staple fare at the theatre, it had to be better melodrama. Extravagant the fare may have been but it was not a tittle as extravagant as some of the offerings at the theatres "across the bridge." That fare, taking its description from the places of performance South of the Thames, was "transpontine" melodrama. The Surrey in St. George's Circus was one of these places across the bridge. In competition with the Royal Victoria Theatre (now the

Old Vic) it served Lambeth and the near neighbourhood. Patrons for the most part were rough and ready customers though not all of them were unappreciative of the merits in the classic and standard plays occasionally given there. The aristocrats of Lambeth preferred the Surrey to the Victoria in those days. Situated in the north of London, in Islington, was Sadlers Wells Theatre. It was a suburban house and audiences here partook of that character. The place was suffering from depression at a time preceding the Samuel Phelps régime which was later to give it an aura of fame.

Of the three stage versions of the Dickens story given simultaneously on February 5th, precedence, if any, should go to *A Christmas Carol* "in three staves," to quote the playbill, at the Adelphi. Rehearsals had begun earlier and the theatre was of higher standing than both the Surrey and Sadlers Wells. After making the first adaptation of any of Dickens stories (*The Pickwick Club* in 1837), Edward Stirling had not ceased to attack each novel of the master as soon as it appeared, scattering as it were, the feathers plucked from Boz upon the stage. *Oliver Twist*, *Nicholas Nickleby*, *The Old Curiosity Shop*, *Barnaby Rudge* and *Martin Chuzzlewit* were all laid under tribute by him, to say nothing of some stray farces linking up with the name of the novelist. There was also *Mister Horatio Sparkins*, taken from one of the *Sketches by Boz*. It was given at the Olympic on March 6th, 1840, when Benjamin Wrench appeared in the title rôle. A once bumptious comedian, he was at 65 treading heavily down the vale of years. The two-act adaptation, which survived only a few performances, was the earliest stage showing of any Sketch by Boz. Here again Stirling was first in the theatrical field.

The plays made by Stirling from the material of Dickens were all acknowledged by him as dramatisations of the novels. That was good business, the box office appeal being ever directed to the vast number of Dickens readers. But when the dramatist took from other authors he was not nearly so particular about acknowledgments. The greater number of his stage offerings were taken from the romances and stories of the time, when not adapted from the French. If the author from whose work he helped himself appeared to have no place in the Hall of Fame, Stirling did not bother to record the source of his pickings or even to admit the drama was an adaptation. The piece would be duly announced as an original play by Edward Stirling. A contemporary journal commenting on his way of doing things said of *Raby Rattler*, a drama of which he claimed complete authorship: "We don't remember if Mr. Stirling was called before the curtain; but if he was, it would have been an excellent opportunity for a display of missiles. Poor Archer does acknowledge the robberies he commits; but no—no—not so—Edward Stirling—*mine—all mine—all Mr. Stirling's.*" Thomas Archer, incidentally, was an alcoholic actor who adapted from the French and adapted well. His version of the Anicet-Bourgeois drama *The Black Doctor* was to see considerable service in the English theatre.

Though it would seem that Edward Stirling had fewer scruples than other dramatic scribes in an unscrupulous age, he was proud of himself as a dramatist. The pages of his autobiography, "Old Drury Lane," attest the fact. With Cellini-like magnification, he sets down his victories. The rich list of achievements was intended to impress. Stirling, in turn, was everything connected with the theatre; actor, playwright, impresario, house manager and stage manager—to say nothing of being the husband of the imperious Mrs. Stirling. At an early age he was playing at Bartlemy Fair in the booth of the celebrated character "Muster" Jack Richardson. His apprenticeship to the drama was by way of stages erected in the common room of

Inns and in country theatres which were often converted stables. A barnstormer, maybe, but with a drive that ultimately led, via almost every theatre in London, to Drury Lane. There must have been something of Vincent Crummles about the man. Perhaps that is why Charles Dickens favoured this actor-playwright whose stories of picturesque, if painful, beginnings would certainly have interested him. Stirling must have spoken of his experiences to the novelist and embellished them, no doubt, with details of no mean description.

No one could have worked harder in the theatre than Stirling; his life was one of incredible activity. He played leading parts, attended to business, stage-managed and, in addition, turned out numerous plays. No wonder they were rushed in the writing; no wonder he had no time to invent a plot. Instead he took whatsoever came his way, be it novel, serial story, ballad, French *vaudeville* or *mélodrame*. They were all grist to the Stirling mill. His first play was produced at Gravesend in 1829 and he, himself, mentioned it as a re-vamping of Ryder's version of Scott's *Kenilworth* which he had artfully re-christened *Tilbury Fort*; or, *The Days of Good Queen Bess*. For over fifty years, this Proteus of the theatre turned out plays. The number claimed is 190 and the claim is fairly substantiated if one counts his periodic re-writings of pieces already sponsored by him either as original (?) dramas or, more truthfully, as adaptations.

The longest period of service in one theatre by Edward Stirling was at Drury Lane where, at the end of his career, he spent a score of years as Stage Manager being responsible for the production or staging of all the plays given during that time. He lived to be eighty-seven, dying in 1894. That same year, a few months after the death of her husband, Mrs. Stirling married Sir Charles Gregory. She and Edward, though good friends through life, had been separated for over half a century. Romance had not lasted long with the Stirlings. She, however, was to find an enduring attachment with someone who devoted his life to her and with whom she went to the altar after she had turned four score years.

To return to *A Christmas Carol* at the Adelphi. Each stave of the play was concerned with the visit of one of the Spirits of Christmas, Past, Present and Future, to that most miserable miser, Ebenezer Scrooge, a character played by O. Smith, the heavy of heavies at the theatre. Dickens, who was no great admirer of Smith, admitted the actor's face was perfect for the part. The piece was announced as being "presented with new scenery, novel mechanical effects, dresses, dances and appropriate old English ballad music." As well as the old ballads were a number of new songs specially composed for the production by G. H. Rodwell, conductor of the band at the Adelphi. In fact the play was inclined as much to the musical as the dramatic. An elaborated item was the song "A jolly giant glorious to see," given to George Forman as the Ghost of Christmas Present. Forman was an unfunny comedian making an early London appearance at the Adelphi. He proved no rival to Edward Wright, the gagging droll cast as Bob Cratchit who thoroughly enjoyed himself in the rôle. Among others in a long list were Maynard as Nephew Fred, Mrs. Frank Matthews as Mrs. Cratchit and Eliza Woolgar (afterwards Mrs. Alfred Mellon) as Bella Morton, described as Scrooge's first, his only love save gold. The performance rejoiced in Christmas revelry. Everybody was happy except Scrooge before his conversion. When that event took place he was more demonstratively joyous than any of them. The curtain fell on Tiny Tim's toast "God bless us, every one."

Of the young toastmaster, Stirling tells this story: "Dickens attended several rehearsals, furnishing valuable suggestions. Thinking to make Tiny Tim (a pretty child) more effective, I ordered a set of irons and bandages for his supposed weak leg. When Dickens saw

this tried on the child, he took me aside: 'No, Stirling, no; this won't do! remember how painful it would be to many of the audience having crippled children.' " The pretty child in the part of Tiny Tim was little Miss Maynard, daughter of the actor playing Nephew Fred.

The version at the Surrey, *A Christmas Carol; or, The Miser's Warning* by C. Z. Barnett, was in two acts and a much grimmer affair than the showing at the Adelphi, though the incidents followed in much the same order, once the ball of repentance for Scrooge was set rolling by the Ghost of Marley. The musical note was absent; no songs enlivened the proceedings and some of the dramatis personae were alien to Dickens. There was Dark Sam, a pickpocket, one of whose victims was Bob Cratchit, and there was a Mrs. Mildew, a beldam, who disposed of the miser's effects after his visioned death. A character billed as a ruined gentleman was named Euston. He was husband to Ellen, the former love of Ebenezer. The Scrooge in this adaptation was Robert Honner and it is interesting to note that Bob Cratchit was played by Samuel Vale. A popular comedian in the Minor Theatres, it has been claimed that Vale was the prototype of Sam Weller. His sayings were said to be in the Weller vein and the W in his speech was invariably replaced by V, such being his normal manner of speech. Bob Cratchit at the Surrey must have sounded very like Sam Weller.

C. Z. Barnett, responsible for the dramatisation, was a playwright employed at various times by the outlying playhouses. We hear of him first at the Pavilion Theatre in the East End, where he provided an *Oliver Twist* drama. Later he came to the Surrey and here his job was to turn out a succession of pieces as wanted by the management—and that was with great frequency. Seldom had he more than a couple of weeks to complete each effort. Can he, and others in a like position, be blamed for going to the French, or to some published story, for inspiration? These dramatists-in-waiting were usually paid at the rate of a pound an act for their work. It was no easy living for them. Life was cheap but playwrights were cheaper. Barnett knew poverty and ended his days in the workhouse.

At Sadlers Wells *A Christmas Carol* had a double-barrelled description when *Old Scrooge; or, The Miser's Dream* was added to the title of this adaptation by Charles Webb. Henry Marston, in his day one of the best players of secondary Shakespearean rôles, enacted Scrooge.

The Webb version of Dickens's story with the sub-title changed to *A Dream of the Past, Present and Future*, was the one given at the Strand on the Monday following the Sadlers Wells production. Scrooge was played by George Bennett, Cratchit by William Attwood, the "Dismal Jimmy" of the company, and Ellen Williams by Mrs. Montgomery. The dream of the miser was portrayed by a Diorama, quite a favourite device at the time in plays pretending to scenic display. The little Strand Theatre was being ambitious.

That evening, February 12th, 1844, four other theatres in London staged *A Christmas Carol*. The Britannia in Hoxton gave a variant of Charles Webb's dramatisation while the same script was probably used at the Victoria, where *A Christmas Carol; or, The Miser's Dream of the Past, Present and Future* was done. An anonymous version was played at the City of London and another at the Queen's. The score in all was eight productions of the *Carol* in the metropolis during the month of February, 1844, an abundant proof of its early popularity on the stage. After that came a halt and save for a revival of the Webb version the following Christmas at the Strand. Ten years elapsed and a new version by F. Fox Cooper was seen at the same theatre on December 11th, 1854,

The adaptation of Edward Stirling next appeared at the Adelphi on December 26th, 1859. This, by virtue of the many songs introduced and the scenic effects, might well have been labelled *Extravaganza*, a popular form of entertainment in those days. Tom Stuart, a tragedian of unbounded ambition but of bounded ability, indulged in torrential acting as Scrooge. Mrs. Alfred Mellon (ex Eliza Woolgar) no longer played Bella Morton but Mrs. Cratchit, and the cheery, long-suffering Bob was allotted to John Lawrence Toole. Toole was a young man who had begun to make his mark as a comedian and Bob Cratchit was the first of the many Dickens characters he was to play. The list was to include Trotty Veck, Caleb Plummer, Sergeant Buzfuz, Ben Britain, Mr. Tetterby and the Artful Dodger.

But, if *A Christmas Carol* was seen less in the theatres over the years that followed the early spate of productions, it was heard more on the platform as a Reading. Charles Dickens, himself, selected the tale for the first of his Public Readings when he began these at the Midland Institute in the Birmingham Town Hall on December 27th, 1853.

Dickens was not the only one who read from Dickens—and the *Carol* was always a prime favourite with Readers and Elocutionists. Eventually the story was to reach the Music Halls. Bransby Williams prepared a Monologue which he named *Scrooge* and performed at the Tivoli in December, 1896. It was one of the first of his Dickens presentations. Assuming the character of the old miser, Williams cleverly managed to tell the whole of the story, effectively, and with due regard for the theatrical values. Other artists of the variety Stage and the Concert World followed his example. Recitals, Impersonations and Scenas related to *A Christmas Carol* came along by the score. Playlets and Sketches on the subject were legion, almost all of them being rearrangements or abridgements of earlier texts. A unique event was the presentation of the old skinflint by a Miss Arabella Allen in *Scrooge*, a music-hall sketch at the Queen's, Poplar, on November 14th, 1910.

A really new version of the story was J. C. Buckstone's one-act drama, also named *Scrooge*, which appeared at the Vaudeville on October 3rd, 1901. Seymour Hicks, in management at that theatre, played Scrooge, giving a dynamic performance. Hollbrook Blinn was the Ghost of Marley and accompanied Ebenezer through his series of visions, doing duty thereby for the three Spirits of Christmastide. Compton Courtts played Bob Cratchit and the adapter appeared as Mr. Middlemark, a new name in the play.

In a condensed form, *Scrooge* was repeated at the London Coliseum with Seymour Hicks in the title rôle, a part he was later to take in a Film of *A Christmas Carol*. Meanwhile Bransby Williams had given his *Scrooge* at the Hippodrome and the Paragon in town, as well as taking it round the Halls in the Provinces. At a subsequent date, Christmas 1950, to be exact, that is fifty-six years after the first hearing of his Monologue of *Scrooge*, he played the same rôle in a Television of Dickens's work. Surely a unique achievement in histrionic annals!

Going back to first appearances, a survey of American productions adds little new to the list of *Carol* dramatisations and, considering the vogue of the story, stage performances of the piece in the United States were comparatively few. The two earliest productions in New York both began on Christmas evening, 1844. The occasion was seasonably appropriate and on that Holy Day theatres in that city were then, seemingly, not closed by law, as in England. There was the Edward Stirling script (plus songs) at the Park with W. Chippendale as Scrooge and an anonymous adaptation at the Chatham where the same character was played by Charles Freer, an English melodramatic actor seeking

stardom in the United States. When Stirling's version was seen again in New York, this time at the Lyceum on December 22nd, 1851, Chippendale repeated Scrooge and John Brougham, the Irish lessee cast himself for Bob Cratchit. Brougham, be it remembered, dramatised a number of the Dickens novels, from *Dombey and Son* to *Bleak House*. Apparently he was content on this occasion not to make his own adaptation but to use the one, tried and approved, from the Adelphi, London.

Only scattered performances of the piece have been given during the past hundred years in the United States. The original title was mostly used though sometimes it was changed to *Old Scrooge*. A small novelty came along in the version invented for a pantomimic company and performed as *The Miser* at the Fifth Avenue Theatre, New York, on May 21st, 1878. It was in mime throughout and an element of ballet would naturally have entered into an entertainment of this kind.

In America the stage history of *A Christmas Carol* may be said to fade out as the Films, Radio and Television take possession of the story. In Europe it has persisted more in the theatre and has undergone many transformations. There is mention in 1908 of a version, *A Message of the Forties*, given at Chester. Here the story was entirely subversive to politics. Scrooge, represented as an out-of-date businessman, was forced to see the error of his ways and the advantages of Free Trade by the Ghost of Richard Cobden Marley. Unabashed propaganda!

A Christmas Carol goes on. Among others of present day actors who have played Scrooge at the Old Vic and elsewhere, are Russell Thorndike and Horace Sequeira. New arrangements of the stage text continue to appear. A version by J. Edward Perrott may be cited and, only recently, two more were added to the number of dramatisations. These were both produced the same evening, December 13th, 1949; one, the work of Rosa de Leon, at the Playhouse, Amerisham, and the other, adapted by T. Hains, at Toynbee Hall, London.

Story and play are among the several works of Dickens popular in Russia and a drama on the subject was given at the Kommistarshevskara Memorial Theatre in Moscow some thirty or more years ago. More propaganda, perhaps! The work has also appeared in another translated form as *Kristnaska Sonorado*, this being Esperanto.

RECENT DICKENSIANA

- "Dickens to Miss Burdett Coutts" by K. J. Fielding. *Times Lit. Supp.*, March 2nd and 9th.
 "Charles Dickens and Thomas C. Evans" by K. J. Fielding. *Notes and Queries*, March 17th.
 "Charles Dickens and *The Weekly News*" by K. J. Fielding. *The Weekly News*, Auckland, N.Z., January 31st.
 "Sir Francis Burdett and *Oliver Twist*," by K. J. Fielding. *Review of English Studies*, April.
The Lost Childhood, Graham Greene, includes an essay on *Oliver Twist*. Eyre & Spottiswoode, 12s. 6d.

THE thanks of the Dickens Fellowship are offered to the following new and retiring Hon. Secretaries:

- Miss E. M. Clague, who succeeds Mrs. Allott at Christchurch.
 Miss Downs, who succeeds Mrs. Graystock at St. Annes.
 Mr. F. J. Hudson, who succeeds Mrs. Edgington at Rugby.
 Miss M. E. Newman, who succeeds Mr. J. L. Dunstan at Hawaii.
 Mr. Donald Dowd, who succeeds Mrs. Stock at Portsmouth.

A warm welcome to Britain is extended to Mrs. Joel Cox (Hawaii), Mr. F. T. Cross (Brisbane), Mrs. Andrew Oliver (Boston), Miss G. Musgrove and Miss Taylor (Christchurch).

THE DICKENS FELLOWSHIP

*Branch Reports of not more than 200 words are invited for inclusion on this page.
Press cuttings are not acceptable.*

BATH

THE Session opened as usual with a Social and Reception by the President, Miss D. Green, and was followed by an introductory review of *David Copperfield*, given by Mr. F. W. G. Thomas. A series of readings covering the whole of the book was then commenced. The annual Birthday Ceremony of laying a wreath on the bust of Dickens in the Pump Room was performed by the Mayor, Miss Kathleen Harper. At the Dinner in the evening the toast of the Immortal Memory was proposed by Rear-Admiral Scott. At the last meeting, Mr. W. Blathwayt gave an interesting account of the origin and development of the Branch. The Society, under the Presidency of Miss Green, with the able support of the Secretary, Mr. W. J. Hone, has continued to make gratifying progress, and a further increase in membership has occurred. Mr. H. B. Dawes was elected as President for the session 1951-1952. Mr. W. Blathwayt accepted the invitation to become Life President in succession to the late Mr. Sturge Cotterell.

F.W.G.T.

BIRMINGHAM

WE have just successfully completed the 7th Session since we re-started our Branch. The Session opened in October with an interesting Address by Mr. Dennis Birch of Lichfield. It was followed in November by a delightful Talk by Mrs. Jane Bacon of London. For the December Meeting Mr. Leslie Biddle of Stratford-on-Avon addressed us. At the first Meeting of 1951 we were fortunate in having Mr. John Greaves, Hon. Sec. at Headquarters, whose recitals are always outstanding. Our own Members entertained us with readings and papers at the March Meeting. The Social events were very enjoyable. We had a Tea and Social in December. The Dickens Birthday Dinner was held in February, when we were most fortunate in having Mr. Richard Shuckburgh and Sir Alfred Boyle, M.P. as our Speakers. Our Dramatic Section, under the guidance of Mr. Simons and Mrs. Holmes, gave an evening of Dickens Sketches in February, refreshments being provided by our ever generous and helpful Members. During winter, whist and beetle drives were held at Members' houses to raise funds for the "Walter Dexter Memorial Fund." To this effort the Dramatic Section also contributed and other Members made articles which were raffled.

E.H.F.D.

HULL

THE first Meeting of the Session was held in October and was arranged as a Social, with Dickensian Competitions, etc., a large number of members and friends attended including a visitor from the U.S.A. who was an enthusiastic Dickensian. The President, Mrs. J. Crosby Witty extended a hearty welcome to the company. At Christmas, in a room decorated with holly, lighted candles and a Christmas Tree, the members listened yet once again to a recital of the ever new *Christmas Carol*. "We should all be grateful for Charles Dickens," said the Lord Mayor of Kingston upon Hull, Councillor H. J. Barney (a former President of the Branch) when members toasted the 139th anniversary of the birth of Dickens at the annual dinner at the City Hotel. Mrs. J. Crosby Witty, the President, said that they were proud to have been in existence for forty-six years—a record which few societies in Hull could equal. Mrs. D. A. N. Jessop, M.A., J.P., proposed the toast of the "Dickens Fellowship" and dealt with the meaning of fellowship to Dickens admirers.

M.C.

SHEFFIELD

THE most interesting season just ended included a lecture by Mr. Norman St. John Shenbridge on "The Grown-up Copperfield," an evening with old and new copies of *The Dickensian*, when members read and discussed some of the articles they found there, a very thoughtful talk from Miss Wiles on "Dickens's Schools," a successful Christmas Social, which members attended in costume, a Micawber supper, at which something really did "turn up,"

which was followed by a Bring and Buy Sale. Later came interesting evenings which included a talk on "Sheffield in Dickens's Day," a greatly successful Birthday Dinner, a Shakespeare lecture, "The Serpent of Old Nile," and a paper by Miss Daff on "Mr. Micawber and Debtors' Prisons." In June we take out "grown up Tiny Tims" for a motor-coach ride through Derbyshire.

H.R.M.

OBITUARY

FRANK S. JOHNSON

THE announcement of the death in March, at the age of 76, of Frank Johnson came as a shock to his many friends in the Dickens Fellowship, which he joined in 1912. His cheery enthusiasm soon brought him office in our counsels, and he became Hon. Sec. of the London Branch in succession to A. E. Brookes Cross, and a little later its President. He also served on Headquarters Council for many years and was Chairman in 1927-8. Johnson's particular interest in Dickens, other than an uncompromising adulation of the novelist, was topographical; and in this he was infinitely painstaking, as may be seen by his letters to *The Dickensian*. He wrote a preface for Arthur Moreland's *Dickens in London*, 1928. As his own knowledge of the subject was excellent, he was often called on to act as a guide to Dickensian pilgrims. Johnson's bright and cheerful personality made him a welcome after-dinner speaker, especially at the City Pickwick Club, of which he was a popular member for many years; he was also a constant attendant at our Annual Conferences, and seldom missed a meeting of Headquarters where he embraced every opportunity of contributing to the discussions. Johnson's love of Dickens was most exhibited in his devotion to *A Christmas Carol*, which he once said he regarded as an extra book of the New Testament, and which he was never tired of reciting in public; he raised many pounds for charity by his recitals in London and all over England. To say that he knew the *Carol* is no mere figure of speech, for he told me that he knew the whole of it, not merely the shortened recital version, word for word.

Johnson will be always remembered at the Dickens House, to which he generously gave a desk from Gad's Hill, and a page of manuscript of an article, in Dickens's hand, on "Women in the Home" (see p. 140).

T. W. H.

DORA L. TATTAM

THE death on 22nd April, after only two days illness, of Miss Tattam, deprives the Dickens Fellowship of a charming and gracious personality which it will be difficult indeed to replace. A member of the Broadstairs Branch for many years, she undertook its revival after the Second World War and became its Hon. Secretary and moving spirit. Miss Tattam was well known to a very wide circle of Dickensians by reason of the fact that she occupied the delightful old house at Broadstairs in which the original of Betsey Trotwood once lived, and there, she, with her inseparable companion Miss Gladys Waterer, the dramatist, was indefatigable in receiving Dickens lovers who called to see Betsey's home. They were invariably received with an old world courtesy that was irresistible and a visit to "Dickens House, Broadstairs," was an indispensable part of the programme of every Dickens pilgrim. Her ambition was to make Broadstairs, Dickens's own "Our English Watering Place," a Mecca for such pilgrims and she went far to achieve her object. To witness her happiness in receiving the Dickens Fellowship Conference in the *David Copperfield* Centenary year of 1949 was to know the devotion with which she pursued her aims. To Miss Waterer, who is to carry on all Miss Tattam's Dickensian activities, we extend our most heartfelt sympathy.

L.C.S.

WE also regret to announce the death of Miss Grace Darbyshire, Miss E. M. Nichols, and Miss Helen McInnes, all of Manchester, Mr. Wm. C. Spear of Plymouth, Mr. F. C. Grimes of Gloucester, Elsie Taylor, Past President, and Lucy Bradfield, of Los Angeles, and J. Cawthorne, former Hon. Sec. of Nottingham, and Mrs. H. C. Fassett, President, East Bay, Cal.

The Dickens Fellowship

LONDON MEETINGS

- June Fri. 8th—Westminster Abbey, West Door, 6-0 p.m.
„ Sat. 23rd—Motor Coach Excursion to Rochester and its
DICKENS PAGEANT. Details on application.
July Sat. 14th—With Dickens and Drood in Holborn. Mr. T. V.
Brewer. Meet Mercers' School, opp. Prudential
Buildings, 2-30 p.m.
Sept. Sat. 22nd—Dorking. A six mile walk conducted by Mr. J. H.
McNulty. Meet Dorking North Station, 3 p.m.
Train: Waterloo 2-7 p.m. cheap day ticket 4/10.

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